


ZATTHU

A TALE OF ANCIENT GALILEE

EDMUND H. SEARS



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College of the Pacific
Stockton, Calif.

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By
EDMUND HAMILTON SEARS

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TO MY WIFE
HELLEN SEARS

19707
FOREWORD
Sel

Zatthu, about whom this story centers, is not an historical character. In the days of Pontius Pilate no one actually figured as he figures in these pages. But he truthfully embodies the spirit of sedition that made the Jews unceasingly restive under Roman rule and finally led them to rebel against it to their own undoing in the reign of Vespasian. Indeed, the fierce hatred that brought on that disastrous conflict and the destruction of Jerusalem by Titus might easily have been fanned long before into a flame of rebellion. That Pontius Pilate realized how critical the situation was is shown by his surrender to the priestly party when they accused Jesus of Nazareth of treason against Rome and clamored for his death.

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PART I
ZATTHU

ZATTHU

A TALE OF ANCIENT GALILEE

I

"Has there been any untoward happening, Glabrio?"

"None."

The brief soldier-like answer was accompanied by the usual salute.

"And you've seen nothing to rouse suspicion?"

"Nothing."

"That is well. Tullius will now relieve you. And mind you keep a sharp lookout, Tullius. From now to midnight is the time that mischief-makers would choose for doing their foul deeds, and near this palace Herod built — I wish the wicked old fellow had never built it, for these rebels will be using it for a stronghold some day — is just the place for them to gather. In this western part of the city they think we can't spy out their doings from our quarters on Mount Zion. Ah, they're a quarrelsome lot, these Hebrews. Galba does well to watch them closely. I am thinking he may have to send to Cæsarea and ask Pilate for more legionaries now that that turbulent Zatthu is stirring up sedition. It's a small force we have at the Tower of Antonia — just a century to keep all the hot-headed malcontents of Jerusalem in order."

"True, Scapulo," commented Glabrio, the relieved sentry who knew he should receive no rebuke for free speech from the talkative and good-natured decurion; "but even one Roman eagle is enough to scare these Hebrew croakers."

They know well that a whole flock will fly to it if it is assailed."

"Yes, but of late they do not seem so badly scared. Zatthu, as I have said, is keeping all Jerusalem in a ferment. So I charge you again to keep your eyes wide open, Tullius. Remember, the Roman discipline is stern whenever a soldier is careless at his post. And now I must take a look at those big towers¹ nearby and see if any trouble-breeders are lurking about them. So, forward all!"

It was in the open space in front of the now unoccupied palace that the above colloquy had taken place. Out of this space the little band was marched, and turning it soon disappeared behind the corner of the palace. But hardly had it made the turn when every man instinctively came to a halt without waiting for the decurion's command. Their ears were startled by a deep groan, followed by the unmistakable noise of a falling body. The clang of metal upon stone suggested the same thing to all. The sentry who had just been left on guard had been felled to the earth, and it was his armor clashing upon the pavement that had made the sound. Exactly what had happened they could not know, bright moonlight though it was; but they hardly needed Scapulo's command, "About! Quick! Follow me!" to rush with all speed to the spot they had just left.

Rounding the corner of the palace they instantly made out the form of their comrade stretched upon the ground. That it was he the glint of his armor plainly showed. So, even as he ran, Scapulo directed several of his men, whom he called by name, to search the neighborhood for the author of the sorry deed. With the others he quickly reached the spot where the fallen Tullius lay, knelt beside him and passed a supporting arm beneath the drooping head.

¹ There were three formidable towers — Hippicus, Phasaël, and Mariamme — close to the solidly built palace of Herod the Great. It was these towers and the palace that yielded last when Jerusalem was captured by Titus.

But Tullius was beyond help. He was still living, but that his end was near was almost immediately seen by Scapulo and his band. The sentry had been stealthily approached from behind and a knife or dagger had been dexterously thrust downward just where the neck and the left shoulder joined. Powerful had been the stroke; powerful the hand that had withdrawn the knife from such a deep and dreadful wound. From it the blood was issuing fast and covering the pavement.

"Can you not speak, Tullius, and tell us how this happened?" inquired Scapulo, anxiously placing his face near that of the man he was supporting and striving to catch any faint words he might utter. He was bent solely on tracing the foul deed; to save the fast ebbing life he knew to be impossible.

The dying man looked up at his comrade longingly, as if imploring him to ward off the death he felt to be close at hand, and opened his lips in the effort to speak. But already it was too late. A gush of blood came from them; he gave one convulsive shudder and passed away.

"A vile murder! A cowardly abominable murder!" cried Scapulo. "If the murderer is caught, crucifixion would be too good for him. Poor Tullius! when I cautioned you just now, I little thought how sorely you needed the warning and how near you were to your end. You were a brave fellow. I know, for I have fought by your side in many a bloody fray. But you'll never wield sword or pilum again."

By this time the men who had been detailed to hunt for the assassin began to arrive. Interrogated one by one, they each made the same report. They had looked diligently through every street and alley; every nook and corner in the immediate neighborhood had been searched. Not a single person of any description had been seen.

"And you got no glimpse of a form just darting into a side street or disappearing in the distance?"

No; such a figure had not been seen and one of the soldiers

made the reasonable statement that search was difficult among the houses that lined in tiers the steep sides of the Tyropæon valley.¹

"No matter if it was difficult, you ought to have found the villain," said the decurion, not concealing his vexation. "Surely you did not look sharply, for he could not have got far away. You were hunting for him only a moment or two after his cursed deed was done. Well, take up the body and bear it to Mount Zion across the bridge over the valley. Galba must know of this at once."

Three of the soldiers unloosed their belts and passed them under the body of their dead comrade. Three more helped them to lift it from the ground and carry it away. Before they left the palace precinct, however, Scapulo gave a lingering look around to see if his eye might not yet rest upon the assassin or discern some trace of him; but he saw nothing.

Hardly, however, had he and his comrades disappeared from view before a man, who even in the moonlight appeared short and dwarfish, stole into the open space. He made his way with rapid but noiseless tread to the spot where the sentry had been stricken down. The copious pool of blood he saw there seemed to affect him joyfully. He gazed at it with grim satisfaction and the harshness of his features was accentuated by what was rather a ghastly leer than a smile, while a fierce light shone in his eyes.

"Fools! Blind fools!" he cried. "They looked in every direction, but they could not see Kelita. No, no! Kelita is too cunning for them. And if they saw him they would think he was too short and too feeble to do any harm. Feeble! Ha ha! This arm is strong enough to reach a Roman's heart through his armor, and many of these foul worshippers of idols will it do to death. To slay them is to serve Jehovah

¹ This valley severed the western part of the city, where the palace stood, from the Temple and the precinct on Mount Zion. So complete was the separation owing to the depth and the steep sides of the valley that the chasm was spanned by two bridges.

even as Samuel did when he hewed Agag the Amalekite to pieces."

Then casting one last gloating look at the broad moist blood-stain which still shimmered in the moonlight, the dwarf stole noiselessly away.

II

"How grim you look this morning, Melicu! Those figs you bought of Diblath the Samaritan have not proved mouldy, I hope."

"No, I was thinking of what happened last night."

"Last night? What did happen last night? I've heard of nothing."

"You'd better go on to your shop, Hattush, instead of trying to pick up the news. It's the middle of the third hour¹ already."

"It must have been something upsetting as it has made you so surly. Tell me what it was. My trade can wait."

"A Roman sentry was killed before the palace."

"A sentry killed? Who did so bold a deed?"

"A bold man. No one else would have dared."

"But who?"

"That's what the Romans are trying to find out, but he hasn't been fool enough to brag about it and be caught."

"Do you think it was one of the sicarii?"

"Maybe. But when a Roman dog meets his day, I'm not going to guess who did it. I'm just glad that it was done."

"How was he killed?"

"With a sword or dagger thrust, they say."

"I believe it was one of that murdering band. What terrible men they are."

"Don't call them murderers. Theirs is a holy cause. Do they not serve Jehovah by slaying his enemies?"

"Does Zatthu approve of them?"

"I never heard him say, but he well might. They are doing just what he's telling us all to do, destroy these heathen dogs."

"But not by stealing up from behind and stabbing them,

¹ The third hour was from 6 to 9 A.M.

as that sentry must have been killed. I can't help feeling a little sorry for him."

"Bah, you are too soft-hearted. Many a time Jehovah was wroth with our fathers because they did not slay their uncircumcised foes to a man. Was not that so, Piltai?"

Melicu's shop was one of many in the bottom of the Tyropæon valley. This was a natural thoroughfare down into which the people continually passed from the tiers of dwellings on its sides; and of this fact the traders of Jerusalem had not been slow to take advantage. The valley was a veritable mart for all the wares that the people of a city need. Buyer and seller met here all day long and discussed all the doings, lesser and greater, that furnished food for converse. But at this early hour the buyer was not much in evidence, and Piltai, a dealer in household utensils whose booth was next to Melicu's, had been tempted by the lively talk he had heard to join the two who were in disputation. He was a short thin man, with a wizened face but a keen piercing eye, somewhat in contrast to Melicu, who was tall and burly and had an aggressive dominant personality.

"Yes, indeed," was his prompt answer to the question put to him. "The king of Hazor and all its people were put to the sword by Joshua who would have sinned against Jehovah had he done less."

"And Ehud slew ten thousand Moabites at the fords of Jordan," added another, a trader in clothing, who had also joined the group. Indeed, quite a number now began to gather in and about Melicu's shop. Buyers as well as traders were assembling. The news of the sentry's death had spread. It absorbed the minds of all and held the commercial instinct quite in abeyance. Every face showed grim resolution. Eyes flashed. Speech was not loud but earnest, and it had but one note — approval of the bloody deed which was viewed not as murder but as justice.

"Well instanced, Hilkiah," said Melicu to the last speaker.

"And may we soon do to the Romans what Ehud did to the Moabites."

"They are not a whit better."

"The man who killed the sentry deserves praise as much as David."

"May he slay as many as Samson!"

"Would that he could call down fire from heaven like Elijah."

"Next month is the Passover. To kill these heathen dogs is a fitting preparation for it."

"How pleased Zatthu will be! He will see his counsels are taking root."

These comments, poured out in quick succession by different members of the excited group, showed the kindly Hattush that he was quite in the minority. He did not venture to resist this tide of vengeful sentiment for fear of being counted unpatriotic, and he was much embarrassed to hear his friend Melicu say as he pointed to him,

"But Hattush here feels sorry for the sentry and doubts if Zatthu would approve of so dealing with an enemy."

All looked at Hattush scowlingly, but before he was taken to task for his recreancy, a warning voice said,

"S-s-sh. The Romans."

The warning was timely. Several Roman soldiers were drawing rapidly near. The violent deed of the preceding night had incensed the Roman centurion. He was sending out groups of men to note what was passing and to look for evidence. The gathering at Melicu's shop naturally roused the suspicion of these emissaries of Galba. They hastened toward it in the hope of finding, if not the culprit, at least some mischief-maker who could be used as a scape-goat.

But the Hebrews were too wary to be caught. Excitement cooled the moment the Romans were sighted. The group melted. Reaching the spot, the soldiers met only a number of men going this way and that way in a perfectly orderly

manner. Such talk as they heard was upon trade. There was no ground for arresting any one. To make an arrest upon mere suspicion was folly. It was deeds of that kind that infuriated the populace and made governing Jerusalem anything but an easy task.

So the Romans looked searchingly at each member of the scattering group without detecting a sign of rebellious activity. They altogether missed Melicu's injunction to his friend Hattush, whispered secretly into his ear,

"Come to the synagogue of Joshua with me tonight and hear Zatthu. I will wait for you. Be at my house at dusk."

III

Jerusalem, like many other ancient cities, was more than once rudely treated by the devastating hand of war. Its walls were rased by Ptolemy, Alexander's general, a few years after the great Macedonian succumbed to fever at Babylon. They were rebuilt and the city thrived for a hundred and fifty years till it was burned by the army of Antiochus Epiphanes. The Maccabees restored its prosperity which was continued and augmented by Herod the Great. Under that vicious but enterprising ruler, the city grew in area, in population, and in the splendor and stateliness of its buildings. The hill where the Temple stood was still the citadel, as it had been even from the time of David; but the higher western hill on the other side of the deep Tyropæon ravine was now included within the city walls and was covered with buildings. Here stood the massive palace where the sentinel was slain. Here were some of the three hundred synagogues that were to be found at this period within the walls of Jerusalem.

The synagogue of Joshua, to which Melicu had asked Hattush to accompany him, was one of these newer synagogues in this newly constructed portion of the city. It was in the southwest corner, as far removed as possible from the Tower of Antonia on Temple Hill where the Roman garrison had its quarters. The distance was not indeed great. Jerusalem, even at this period of expansion and prosperity, covered only a few hundred acres. From corner to corner it measured hardly a mile. None the less, the Jews did not wish to be directly under the eyes of the vigilant legionaries when they talked sedition.

No more did they choose to attract attention by flocking in crowds to a meeting place. All Jerusalem was eager to hear Zatthu. Any synagogue that he spoke in was filled to overflowing. Precautions therefore had to be taken to keep

his audiences from being unwieldy and from inviting Roman interference. The news that he was to address a gathering was not spread broadcast. To the appointed synagogue the Jews who had been notified made their way with wariness. They strolled in one by one for an hour or two before the designated time.

In the Synagogue of Joshua they had been thus assembling for some time before Melicu and Hattush reached it. Pressing to the front the two traders found seats with difficulty, for the building, which did not comfortably hold more than two hundred, was already full. Yet it had to find room for more. Singly, or by twos and threes, men continued to enter, each one carefully noted by the doorkeepers as he passed inside. For this was a conclave of true-hearted patriots and no one in the pay of Rome could gain admission if he was under the smallest suspicion. But the ways of the spy are subtle. His is a profession that calls for unceasing craft, resourcefulness and ready invention. If those vigilant watchers at the doorway had admitted none whose intent was treacherous, they had done well.

By the time that dusk had thickened into night every foot of standing room in the synagogue was occupied. A few late comers had to be denied admission. And it seemed indeed as if none but patriots were to be found among those dark-eyed Hebrews, on every one of whom was stamped indelibly the marks of one of the mighty races of the world. It was an inspiring scene that Hattush and Melicu became a part of. It had indeed more significance than they could read. For even in the dim light of the lamps the faces of this body of determined men showed the power that had made their people great in the land of their fathers and was to make them great through countless centuries in every part of the globe. Those flashing eyes, those strong features aglow with patriotic fire, those attitudes that, both of the sitting and the standing, denoted resolution and alertness, not an indolent or shifting

mood — all bespoke virility, power to scheme and power to accomplish, power, too, for limitless sacrifice and suffering in a holy cause. Here was not the patient submissiveness of a brooding Oriental race. These were the children of those who had murmured in the Wilderness, turned against Moses even at the foot of flaming Sinai, called for a king when God himself was ruling them and then breathed defiance against the very kings they had set up. These were of the race of Joshua and Deborah and Samson and the Maccabees. These were the progeny of holy men who had spoken the word of the Most High.

To the glorious days when God had shown them peculiar favor, smitten down their enemies and touched their prophets' lips with sacred fire, they now looked back with pride and longing. And their longing was intensified by a sense of their own degradation. For was it not degrading to bow down to heathen Rome? Why should this coarse and brutal people flout them and jeer at them and trample them under foot? Why had the dread Jehovah ever allowed it to wax mighty on the earth? It had reared no altars unto Him. It had had no Moses or Elijah to interpret his Holy Will or work wonders in his Holy Name. Rome was unclean. Rome set up graven images that Jehovah could only look upon with loathing. Why then did He not blast its legions with lightning, overthrow its idols and level its foul temples with an earthquake? Why did not Rome's very sky grow black in token of God's wrath?

It was this feeling, smouldering ever in the Hebrew mind, that Zatthu was kindling into a flame. A Pharisee of distinguished family, he had while but a youth formed the purpose of freeing his country. As he reached manhood the idea became a passion. He was now but twenty-five, but he possessed a dignity and gravity beyond his years and his native powers of leadership had made his influence potent in Jerusalem. He never lost an opportunity to plead his cause;

and so menacing had he become that the Romans were gathering the evidence that would warrant them in arresting him for sedition. Yet fearlessly, though warily, he kept at his appointed task. No ties of kindred had he to make him pause. He was unmarried; his father and mother were dead; the brother and sister who shared the household with him were in full sympathy with his cherished purpose. Nor did he have to consider the question of subsistence. His father had grown wealthy by dealing in rugs, silks, linens and all manner of fine fabrics; and this business Zatthu's brother carried on successfully. He was several years older than Zatthu, but to this younger scion of the house he looked up with reverence and admiration, really believing that Jehovah had chosen him to free Israel from bondage. Whatever need Zatthu ever had for money or for the things that money could furnish was promptly and amply satisfied.

The synagogue having received all it could hold, the chief elder began the ceremony of worship. But he made the ritual brief. It was not for worship that they had come. It was to hear Zatthu. And as soon as the brief service of prayer and praise was ended, Zatthu arose and spoke.

From the beginning he held his hearers spellbound, for he spoke with the force and intensity of a forceful and passionate nature. In stature he was not imposing, being slight and of medium height. But his large flashing eyes, his strongly marked features and his piercing vibrant speech all betokened a character fitted to impose its own will upon others. Yet burning though his utterance was, it was modulated like that of all who are born to sway the multitudes. Not all of his words had stinging power. Not all of his tones had the note of the clarion. Now his speech was low and calm, though always distinctly heard. Now it was more unrestrained, like the steady flow of a deep and rapid river. And now it was passionate and stormy, its thrilling cadences

surging upon his hearers like billows crashing on an ocean shore.

Having thus at his command all the arts of the native orator, he held the assemblage absolutely under his sway while he reviewed at length the insolence and the iniquities of Roman rule. Then reaching the point where he wished to play upon the emotions, he burst into a passionate harangue.

"Next month is our holy Passover," he exclaimed, "and think what it means! Think how Jehovah passed over the doors of our own people on that terrible night and smote the Egyptians till there was not a single house without one dead! He helped us then. He helped us through many generations, and will he fail us now? Like a flock our people followed Moses out of Egypt. Pharaoh pursued them with his chariots. The Red Sea swallowed him. At Rephidim came forth Amalek and fought with Israel. He was strong. He was valiant. But Moses stretched forth his rod and Aaron and Hur held up his weary hands. Jehovah saw. Jehovah reached down from the heavens. The Amalekites fell before the sword of Israel like the grain before the sickle. And what could the chariots of Jabin do against Him who Keepeth Israel and who neither slumbers nor sleeps? Into Deborah He sent his spirit. She breathed it into Barak and he drove the chariots before him as the stormwind drives the dust. Do you tell me that Saul was vanquished by the Philistines and fell upon his sword to save himself from shame? It was even so. Saul's sons were slain and he himself died by his own hand on Mount Gilboa. But why was Jehovah's might not used against his enemies? Why did they triumph over Saul and drive him from the field of battle? Even because he disobeyed. He lost his faith, and when he had lost it, he was no better than the uncircumcised Philistines who cut off his head and bore it in triumph away.

"And so it is today and so it will always be. Have faith, O men of Judæa! Have faith and the rivers will make way

for you to cross. Have faith and a cloud will go before you by day and a pillar of fire by night. Have faith and to you as to the servant of Elisha the heavens will open and you will see that round about you there are horses and chariots of fire.

“What are men? Are they not, I hear you saying, like the leaves of the forest? In the springtime the leaves are all alike green; the autumn comes and every one of them falls to the ground. One is no better than another. And is one pebble on the beach more perfect than the myriads that are ceaselessly washed by the waves? No, surely not. But be not deceived, O my countrymen! Be not lulled into sloth by thoughts like these! The heathen are indeed like the leaves or the sands upon the shore. Not so the Hebrew, unless he lets his faith in Jehovah die. For has not the great Jehovah chosen us to be his own peculiar people? Has He not made this manifest by signs and wonders manifold? The Hebrew who has faith is not like a common sheep in a countless herd. He is a prophet. He is a king. With Jehovah on his side he can do deeds that will be told all through the ages. He can. . . .”

But all that the man of faith could accomplish was not told. A low sibilant noise was made at this moment by one of the doorkeepers who had suddenly entered the room. It was the danger signal. Scouts were posted whenever a gathering like this assembled. They had given warning, and the warning meant that Roman soldiers were near and were undoubtedly about to make their way into the building. Instantly, therefore, after the warning was given Zatthu ceased speaking, left the raised platform from which he had given his harangue and withdrew into a small secret apartment, so cunningly contrived that it would hardly have been discovered by a thorough search. To be sure, the Romans would not have ventured to arrest Zatthu had they found him sitting quietly there as a listener. Still, it seemed best to secrete him so that not even his presence there should be

known and help to bring him into suspicion. And even as he disappeared from sight one of the Batlanim, or elders, came forward and began to address those present upon a matter of justice which two disagreeing members of the synagogue had referred to it. Hardly had he opened the case, however, when Scapulo, the decurion who had placed the unfortunate Tullius on duty the previous evening, appeared with two legionaries and forced his way into the assembly.

No attempt was made to bar them out. To defy the authority of Rome was as unwise as it was useless; so the doorkeepers merely protested against the intrusion as needless and insulting. But so densely packed was the synagogue that Scapulo and his two followers had difficulty in getting a footing in it. They were not indeed able to do so until they had ordered several to go outside and had taken advantage of the room thus made. Gradually edging his way forward and indifferent to the scowling looks directed at him, Scapulo stood and surveyed the scene. There was nothing to suggest disorder. He listened to the elder who all this time had been calmly presenting the question the synagogue had to decide. His remarks had not the smallest savor of sedition. In disgust at his failure Scapulo said to Piltai the trader in household wares, who happened to be standing next to him,

“Did not your countrymen come here to hear Zatthu this evening?”

“Zatthu?” was the answer. “I do not know him. I do not think he belongs to this synagogue. We came to settle a question of justice which one of our elders is now presenting.”

“A very interesting question it must be to have drawn so many here. Is the synagogue usually so thronged when you settle questions of justice?”

“This is a matter of great importance. It has roused much feeling.”

“So I see. Your elder is long in presenting it. When did he begin?”

"Some time ago. I could not say when, I have listened so intently."

"And Zatthu has not been speaking at all?"

"Zatthu? Zatthu? I told you he did not belong to this synagogue. This is only one of our regular meetings to settle a question of justice."

Scapulo knew he should have found a very different scene if he could have made his way unannounced into the synagogue. But he saw the uselessness of further questioning. Reluctantly he withdrew and the two soldiers followed him. That he was closely watched he did not doubt, and he therefore thought he should gain nothing by remaining in the neighborhood. He proceeded back to the garrison, and as soon as he was well on his way the gathering in the synagogue of Joshua dispersed. The question of justice was not settled that evening, and as those who had made up the assemblage wended their way homeward their talk was solely of Zatthu and his burning words.

Hattush, Melicu and Piltai walked together. They were not brought into these pages to play individual parts of consequence, and they will not appear again. What passed between them has its value only as showing how the men of Jerusalem were at this time feeling toward Rome.

"What think you now of sparing these heathen, Hattush?" inquired Piltai.

"Jehovah did indeed destroy them unsparingly in the olden days," replied Hattush. "Still, it does seem to me a fearful thing to steal up behind a man and stab him in the back."

"But if he is an unbeliever, he isn't really a man," answered Melicu. "He is only fit to be slaughtered, like the Philistines whom Samson slew. But never mind, Piltai. We'll convert him yet, and when Zatthu raises his banner he'll be in the thickest of the fight."

IV

In raising the spirit of insurrection, Zatthu very well knew the hazard he was braving. The centurion in command of the Roman garrison would not sit still and let rebellion foment under his very eyes. The man who was encouraging it was surely marked. His words and actions were daily told to Galba. Rome never suffered her authority to be openly defied. Zatthu must crush the ruling power or speedily be crushed by it.

His sanguine hope was that he could crush it. Judæa was a very hotbed of sedition. Not long after the death of Herod the Great, it had been made a Roman province together with Samaria; for his son Archelaus had ruled this section of Palestine with such barbarity that he was deposed by Rome. In his place a procurator ruled, and the Roman system of government, with its customs, excise and other obnoxious features, was established over the unhappy and resentful people.

The resentment was all the deeper because the two other sons of Herod the Great still ruled the provinces they had inherited. Herod Antipas was tetrarch of Galilee and Peræa; Herod Philip, of the district beyond the Jordan. True, the genuinely patriotic Jews were no friends of this unprincipled dynasty. Herod the Great had rebuilt the Temple at Jerusalem, but he was a loose liver and a skeptic. His sons were as irreligious and unprincipled as he, and Archelaus, the elder, who had been dethroned, added gross cruelty to his other vices. But even a Herod was better than a procurator. So thought the people of Judæa in their fierce hatred of the oppressive Roman rule.

To make them openly rebel against this rule was Zatthu's aim. All the sects that were truly Jewish at heart he hoped to unite by the tie of patriotism. He was himself a Pharisee

of the strictest school. But surely Pharisees, Sadducees and Essenes could forget their differences in their love for their bleeding and insulted country. Let the fawning Herodians pander to the reigning princes. They were no true children of Abraham. In their minds they were heathen; in their lives they were corrupt. Nor was it worth while to fire the Assassins (the Sicarii) with fresh zeal. They were only too ready to strike down a Roman whenever they found opportunity. The hunchback Kelita, who had slain the Roman sentry in the Temple precinct, was one of their body and his deed well typified their reckless daring. Rather did they need to be curbed than goaded on; for such wanton violence could only incite the Roman government to watchfulness and stern acts of repression. But if all who had a true pride in the nation's former glory would bury petty jealousies and strike at the power that was oppressing them, what might not be done?

Did Zatthu really believe that the God of Israel would fight with his chosen people now as He had done when He led them out of Egypt? Did he think that when the battle actually raged the Roman armies would be destroyed by fire from heaven like the companies sent to seize Elisha? Undoubtedly he did. If he had wavered at first in thinking so, he wavered no longer. So often had he urged the idea that it had now fully possessed him. He had the prophet's soul. He was fixed in the belief that his people were to rule the world. They were set apart by Jehovah. All the other nations worshipped false gods and were marked for destruction. Jehovah loathed their unclean rites. He could but destroy them all. It was only a matter of time. These Romans were ever growing more wanton and shameless. Could the Keeper of Israel see his own children slain and routed by these wantons? It could not be. So he preached insurrection with all the fire of his passionate spirit. Miracles might not after all be

needed when the hour of deliverance came. But were they needed, they would surely come to pass.

Yet withal Zatthu was wary. The blow must soon be struck, or he would be seized and prevented from directing it. Already therefore had he become careful about showing himself upon the streets. When he did walk abroad, he went in the midst of a group of devoted followers. And his caution had been increased by Kelita's murder of the sentry. He must lose no time in making the leaders of the three great sects come together. That done, there could be an uprising that would sweep Rome's insolent soldiers from the land.

But Rome was too watchful for him. The appearance of Scapulo and his men at the synagogue made him seek seclusion for a brief space. From the gathering at which he had spoken so vehemently he did not go to his own house on the Temple Hill. He took shelter with a friend who lived in one of the houses that were clustered on the west slope of the Tyropæon valley as thickly as the nests of swallows line some projecting eaves. Here he kept himself concealed till the afternoon of the second day. He then ventured forth, intending to go to the house of a wealthy and influential Sadducee where he was to confer with a number of the weighty members of their party. The Sadducee lived in the older or eastern portion of the city; and to reach his dwelling it was necessary to cross the Tyropæon valley. Thinking the Romans might be guarding the two bridges that spanned it, Zatthu and his followers—men with arms concealed about them always attended him now—went down the steep and narrow street that led into the thoroughfare at the bottom. But just as they were about to pass into this thoroughfare directly opposite to the shop of Melicu, the dealer in dried fruits, they found themselves confronted by a decurion and his squad. Looking back they saw that another group of soldiers had closed in upon them in the rear. Flight was impossible. Resistance to these men in full armor was unwise. Zatthu had

to act quickly, for his followers had already drawn their long knives. It was barely possible they could hew for him a passage through these formidable foes, but only at the cost of the lives of nearly all. This he would not sanction.

"No violence, friends!" he said commandingly. "It will hurt our holy cause."

And being told he was under arrest, he gave himself up and was led away.

But the scene that followed showed how unspeakably the people of Jerusalem detested the Roman rule. Zatthu's friends put up their knives at their leader's bidding, but they followed the soldiers and jibed them unceasingly. They called them evil names. They prayed that fire from heaven might come down and consume them. Attracted by their vehement outcries, others joined them and hurled similar execrations at the Romans. Nor were they satisfied with mere wordy demonstrations. Keeping out of reach of the soldiers' spears and broadswords, they began to shower missiles upon them. Refuse, stones, stray bits of broken earthenware, anything on which they could lay their hands they used against these hated servants of the power that ruled them, while ever fiercer and more insulting grew their jibes.

"They are only carrion, vile carrion."

"Not all the water in Jordan would wash them clean."

"The dogs in the street would not lick up their tainted blood."

"And the kites wouldn't touch their corpses."

"They are filthier than swine."

"They are lepers every one."

"Their Rome is a sink that no Jew could bear to smell of."

Against these insolent cries the Roman discipline was proof; but the ever growing violence called for rebuke. One of the decurions suddenly turned and charged the crowd with half a dozen of his men. Too dense was the throng to give way before the assault. The decurion's sword severely

wounded one of the rioters; the spears of his soldiers pricked others with no gentle touch. Suddenly all fell back as rapidly as the crowded space allowed. Tamed but still defiant, they followed now at a distance and their execrations were more feebly uttered. Without farther molestation the group of legionaries with their captive made their way up to the Tower of Antonia on Temple Hill.

Without delay Zatthu was ushered into Galba's presence. The centurion eyed him sternly for some moments without speaking. He was measuring the man and in his heart was rather pitying than condemning him. In the erect and fearless mien, the finely moulded noble features and the burning eyes that told of a soul on fire with love of country, he saw a foe to be respected, yes, even to be feared if left at large. Himself a patriot and a man of humane feeling, he could not but admire this alien who was giving to his own land a devotion without stint or measure. But he was a Roman officer and this sympathy he could not even in the smallest degree make manifest to this dangerous enemy of Rome.

"Your name is Zatthu?" he inquired.

"It is."

"And you are conspiring against the Roman Empire?"

Zatthu eyed the centurion unflinchingly, but gave no answer.

"You do not deny it because you know it is true," continued Galba, returning the Hebrew's steady gaze; "as it is also true that you have been making seditious speeches to your countrymen at various times and places — night before last, for example, at the synagogue of Joshua. Are you ready to admit this?"

"Of what use to deny it? You have made up your mind that it is so. But you have no proofs."

"Proofs I have and proofs in abundance."

"Spies!" exclaimed Zatthu, in a tone that was almost a hiss and made plain his contempt and indignation.

“Perhaps. I shall not tell you how I obtained my information. But if you think your own countrymen have been persuaded by Rome to betray your words and movements, visit your wrath upon them, not upon the officers of Rome. But such proofs as I have will not now be made known to you. You are not on trial here. So serious do I consider your case that I am going to send you to Cæsarea to be tried by Pilate, the governor of Judæa. To him I shall forward all the evidence I have against you. And a part of that evidence is the murder of the sentry who was slain near your temple three nights ago. I have not been able to trace that cowardly deed directly to you; but I cannot really doubt it resulted from the inflammatory appeals you have been making to the men of Jerusalem. That Pilate will share this conviction of mine, I have no right to say; yet at heart I am sure that he will do so.

“If you were really on trial, I should of course let you speak and defend yourself. But that right you are to exercise before Pilate, not before me. Tomorrow you will take the journey, and the force that goes with you will be sufficient to make any attempt at rescue futile.

“Decimus, see that the prisoner is securely guarded through the night.”

V

Pontius Pilate had been procurator of Judæa and Samaria for some years before the events so far narrated took place. It was in the year 26 A.D. that he took up the reins of government and it was at Cæsarea, the main seat of the Roman power in Palestine, that he made his home. This city had grown from the humblest of beginnings. Before Judæa was made a Roman province, it was not even a thriving settlement, but only a point where ships could put in from sea. Augustus Cæsar ruled that the procurator should there establish himself with the forces that were to keep this troublesome country in order. That was in the year 6 A.D.; and from that time it had been a post of consequence. The first procurator lived there altogether. Pilate for a time gave it the preference over Jerusalem, where he was sure to find himself in no friendly atmosphere.

Good reason had its citizens for disliking him. His rule had been tyrannical and harsh. With true Roman contempt for an alien people he had trampled on things the Jews held sacred. To build an aqueduct he seized their sacred fund; and the uprising caused by this high-handed action he put down with bloodshed. Into their city, where Solomon had reigned in glory and invoked the blessing of Jehovah, he brought the standards of Rome's heathen rule. And even their temple had not been free from his desecrating hand; for in it he had tried to hang trophies of Roman conquest in the shape of brazen shields.

These and other despotic actions had made his name a byword of reproach with the people of Jerusalem. Naturally therefore he disliked the city and its inhabitants. Presenting himself there from time to time, he yet found life more genial at Cæsarea. The Jews he looked upon as unreasonable and quarrelsome. For their traditions he had no

respect. Their pride in their past he viewed as a menace to Rome. In their religion he could see no meaning. So far as the spirit of inquiry was in him, he sought enlightenment from the philosophers of Greece and his own country. How could there be truth in the rites and teachings of these zealots who put their strange belief above the worship of all nations?

Not at all pleased then was Pilate to learn that there had been fresh disturbances at Jerusalem and that the author of them had been sent to him for punishment. Why had Galba done this? Why had he not dealt with him himself? He might have imprisoned him or even have put him to death; for no doubt the man was guilty. But he, Pilate, was loath to pronounce a harsh sentence on a Jew of note and cause himself to be still further reviled by the rabble at Jerusalem. Still, he always loved to see and study men, and this man appeared to be no ordinary character. Carefully he read all the evidence that Galba had sent him. It was damning. Severity was absolutely called for. But it would be well worth while to draw the man out and get at his mind before passing judgment upon him.

VI

Zatthu and his guards were three days in making the journey from Jerusalem to Cæsarea. The distance was sixty miles, and twenty miles made a good day's journey when haste was not imperative.

As he passed within the city walls Zatthu cast searching glances about him. On every side were the evidences of the hated Roman presence and activity. All the buildings showed the solid Roman masonry, the equal of which the world has not seen. They soon passed by the amphitheatre without which a Roman city could not be complete. Proceeding not very much further, for the city was not large, they came to the seat of government close to the harbor. Here they could look out upon the sea, but it was not its blue waters that chiefly attracted Zatthu's eyes. They rested on the massive breakwater that offered protection against the fierce Mediterranean storms. He turned to gaze at the solid official buildings. They too symbolized the might, the seemingly indestructible might, of the power he had set himself to overthrow. Something very much like a curse shaped itself in his mind as he noted these signs of august rule. It was a stern task he had undertaken. But captive though he was, he had lost nothing of heart or hope. What mattered it how strong was the power to be conquered? Jehovah who made the mountains was to bring it down into the dust.

It was therefore with a defiant spirit that Zatthu faced Pilate after spending his first night in Cæsarea in one of the prison cells. The substantial stone structure in which those condemned for all manner of offences were kept contained also a number of rooms devoted to administrative purposes; and one of these was set apart for the uses of the Governor of Judæa. Into this apartment Zatthu was ushered the morning of the first day after his arrival. His hands were

fettered. A soldier marched on either side of him. But his step was rather that of a victorious general than of a captive as he was brought before the platform on which Pilate sat in a chair of state.

They were face to face — accuser and accused, the Roman magistrate and the Jewish rebel. Behind each was a wonderful and mighty historic past. Each was now conscious that he spoke not for himself but for his nation. To the Roman this consciousness gave a disdainful feeling that did not however dull his interest in this man whose bold mien so challenged his attention. Out of blinking, half-closed eyes he gazed quizzically at Zatthu, his fingers interlaced and his thumbs moving nervously now and then as if to relieve the tension of his mind. His corpulent body and full face suggested the man who was bent on getting all earth had to give him; yet it was not difficult to see that he was no mere sensualist. The mouth, weak though it was, showed refinement. The forehead was that of a thinker. The eyes, too furtive for sincere frank character, had a flickering light of intellectual curiosity. And his spirit of inquiry was strongly roused as Pilate gazed for a time in silence at this defiant figure. How troublesome these Jews were! he thought. Made arrogant by a past of which the world knew nothing and which probably was mere myth and legend, they would not accept cheerfully, as other nations did, the rule of the imperial city that had conquered the world. They thought their insignificant Jerusalem as great as Rome. They were always quarrelsome and rebellious. And here was a man guilty of sedition and murder who faced him as if he were a king. Well, he would pry into his mind. As this wretched race insisted on disturbing his peace, he would get all the satisfaction out of them he could; and here was an offender well worth questioning.

“You are Zatthu?” he inquired.

“Zatthu is my name.”

“And the name of a rebel and a murderer.”

"That is mere accusation. You make it as if it were proved. Is that Roman justice?"

"Call it an accusation if you wish. Do you deny the charge?"

"I do. I am neither a rebel nor a murderer."

"Yet you have been making Jerusalem a very hotbed of sedition, and murder is done by those who listen to your evil counsels."

"Again, accusation but no proof."

"The proof is here," and with a weary air, as if he ought not to be put to the trouble of establishing what was perfectly well known, Pilate took up from a small table at the side of his chair a scroll of parchment.

"On this paper," he continued, "I find a full account of your wicked and treasonable doings. In particular it is stated that on the evening of the twenty-second day of this month of Adar, that is to say, just five evenings ago, you spoke in the Synagogue of Joshua at Jerusalem and urged the men who filled it to overflowing to rise against Rome."

"Again I say, a mere charge — just such a one as might be invented by one who wanted to do me harm."

"But the person who makes the charge was there and testifies to what he heard."

"Who was he?"

Pilate laid down the paper and interlocked his fingers as before. He looked down, gazed at Zatthu for a moment, and looked down again. Finally he said,

"He is a man whose word must be believed. I do not choose to reveal his name."

"Is it written there?"

Impatiently Pilate replied,

"I am the questioner here, not you. These charges are made by men on whose every word Rome relies. It is for you to meet the charges. Once more I ask, do you deny them?"

"I have already said that I am neither a rebel nor a murderer."

"You must meet them more directly. Did you or did you not talk sedition at the Synagogue of Joshua on the evening of the twenty-second day of this month of Adar?"

"I did not."

Pilate was puzzled. Not willing to meet steadily the fearless flashing eyes of the prisoner, he yet seemed gradually to read his thought and to see how he could baffle him. A faint malicious smile stole over his face as he asked.

"Did you tell your hearers to resist the rule of Rome?"

"I did."

"And yet you did not talk sedition?"

"No."

"You contradict yourself. You add falsehood to rebellion."

"What is rebellion?"

"You do not need to be told. Answer your question yourself."

"I will. My people serve Jehovah. They but do His bidding when they throw off the yoke of a nation that insults Him by bowing down to unclean gods."

"Who is Jehovah?"

"The creator of heaven and earth."

"How do you know? Did you ever see Him?"

"No. I do not count myself worthy. But our fathers saw Him and talked with Him of old."

"What was He like?"

"He is too mighty and too terrible to be described. Even his messenger is like a refiner's fire."

"Like a refiner's fire? Why should he be like that?"

"To try men as silver is tried — burn away what is vile and leave only what is pure."

"A good thing, that, I should say. I should like to put men I know through the process."

"Would you like to go through it yourself?"

"Why not?"

"The fire burns fiercely. It burns till everything that is foul, everything that is base, everything that is cruel and lustful in a man is consumed. Sometimes there's very little left in a man when it dies down."

Again Pilate's eyes sought the floor. His questioning of this prisoner was not bringing him unmixed satisfaction. Presently he asked,

"Did your people always serve this Jehovah? I seem to have heard mention of kings of whom they are still proud — David, and Solomon, and others too."

"My country was great under David and Solomon long before Rome was founded. But Jehovah chose this line of kings for them, even as He chose my race to be his own peculiar people."

Again the sarcastic smile spread over Pilate's face as he replied,

"A doubtful choice, I should say. You have done nothing to justify it but bow your necks down to be stepped on; and seeing them in this inviting position, Rome has stepped on them."

Zatthu's answer was not the explosive fury of a shallow nature. With calmness and not without majesty, he said,

"This whole land has been dyed deep with the blood we have poured forth in fighting Jehovah's enemies. When the time comes we shall pour it forth as freely and as gladly as before in fighting Rome."

"And yet you claim you are not a rebel!"

"I have explained why I am not. Our cause is Jehovah's cause. We own no earthly master. Rome will some day learn this to her cost."

"Perhaps you plan to murder us all as you murdered the sentry near Herod's palace."

"You claim to have proved that I have talked seditiously,

though you produce no witness and will not name your informer. Let it pass. I will not fight the accusation, for I see it would be useless. But of this charge of murder I am absolutely innocent and I challenge you to prove it."

"The murder followed close upon and was occasioned by your own inflammatory talk; for your seditious harangue in the Synagogue of Joshua was but one of many you have made. The foul deed would never have been done had you not been putting lawlessness and murder into the minds of your countrymen. That you therefore are the real perpetrator of this abominable act is evident."

"It is not evident. I deny it utterly. You insult justice when you brand me as a murderer and produce no evidence. I lift these chains as witness how wantonly Rome treats her captives."

Zatthu held up his manacled hands and, still self-controlled, he yet spoke as one whose soul was shaken. His rich sonorous voice rang through the room. He seemed the accuser, not the accused, and his was the dominating presence there.

Pilate was disturbed. He glanced furtively about him to see how this formidable prisoner was impressing the soldiers who had brought him in. Especially did he look to a Roman officer who was seated near him on the platform. He was a man of frank noble countenance and magnificent proportions. That Pilate had given him a seat of honor near his own magisterial chair showed that he held some position of consequence. With a grave countenance he was noting and studying Zatthu carefully, but his expression gave no clue to his feelings. Pilate would plainly have been glad to get from him some intimation as to what his own procedure should now be. Receiving none, he had to act upon his own initiative; but one skilled in reading character would have seen that the conclusion he came to was reached only through doubt and hesitation.

"Quintus," he said, addressing the centurion who had conducted Zatthu into Pilate's presence, "remove the prisoner's chains."

The order was obeyed, yet it was hardly a grateful look that Zatthu gave to Pilate in consequence. It was rather that of one who reads weakness in an enemy and wonders how far he can use it.

"Roman justice," said Pilate, "is stern but it is not cruel. It is not its wont to offer insults or to make accusations it cannot sustain. If it was not a man fired by your own incendiary talk that killed the sentry, who did it? Who could have had the wish or the interest to do it?"

"You surely know that there exists in this country a band of men who are called Sicarii, or Assassins. Stung by Rome's wanton and hateful rule, they count it a deed of justice to slay a Roman in any way they can. It was doubtless one of this band who slew the sentry."

"Do you approve of them?"

"They are patriots. It is not by such stray acts of bloodshed that Jehovah will set us free."

"How will He set you free?"

"By lightning that will blast you. By fire from heaven that will consume you. By earthquakes that will swallow you up. By the angel of Death who will smite you as the hurricane levels the corn."

"Jehovah seems to have taken you into His counsels."

"I only count upon His doing for this present generation what He did for our fathers long ago."

"Enough. Your own words have convicted you of sedition. It would only be justice to sentence you to death. But I prefer to keep you alive as a hostage. You will be imprisoned here and word will be sent to Jerusalem that if any uprising takes place there, your life will pay the forfeit. Quintus, take the prisoner away and guard him securely, as you value your own life."

“Shall I put the fetters on him again?”

Once more Pilate looked at the young officer beside him, as if to get a hint whether clemency or severity should be shown. But as before the grave face was impassive. Pilate hesitated and then said,

“No. I do not think that is necessary. When the cell door is fastened upon him, his countrymen will plot in vain to set him free.”

As haughty and unsubdued as when he entered it, Zatthu went out of the magisterial room.

VII

When the cell door clanged upon him, he sat down and brooded over his present condition. Unwavering before Pilate, he had to admit to himself that his plight was desperate. Cæsarea was a Roman city; it was strongly garrisoned; there were few of his countrymen living in it. Looking about him, he saw that the prison was massively built and the window of his cell was heavily barred. Escape seemed impossible.

But the God of his fathers would not desert him. The cause he lived for was Jehovah's cause. It could not fail. But would Jehovah make stone walls and locks and bars give way and restore him to freedom? What was he, Zatthu, that he should expect such a miraculous deliverance? His heart grew humble as he realized his presumption in so looking for a divine manifestation in his favor. For a while a distrustful mood took possession of him. Earnestly he prayed that he might be forgiven if he had erred in putting himself at any time before his great and holy purpose. But as the hours passed his faith returned. His indomitable spirit was filled with a sense of Jehovah's guidance and protection. Trustful and resigned he sank into a deep sleep soon after sundown, for he felt the strain of the harrowing experiences he had been through.

About midnight he was suddenly wakened. Something fell with a clash on the floor of his cell close to his bed of straw. Starting up at the noise and forgetting his whereabouts, he cried out,

"Who is there?"

"Hist!" came a low voice. "It is I, Kelita."

"Where are you? How came you here?"

"I am at the window. Put a chair beneath it if you have one and stand on it. Then we can talk to each other."

Groping his way to the chair, Zatthu placed it underneath

the window and mounted it. So standing, he found himself face to face with the hunchback whose form he could barely make out through the prison bars. The window was just below the ceiling of the cell, about six feet from the floor, and the chair brought Zatthu's head just opposite the window. No sooner had he placed himself than he inquired eagerly,

"How came you here in Cæsarea? How did you ever climb up to this window?"

"S-sh. This is no time for questions. Everything will be explained to you when the time comes. Speak only in whispers and not a word now. The sentry is about to pass this way. I hear his footsteps."

"But he will see you." Zatthu could not forbear saying in the faintest whisper.

"No," was the equally low answer. "It is pitch dark. Not a star is shining."

Both were now silent and Zatthu heard the sentry's tread grow gradually louder and then as gradually fade away after he had passed by. When it was no longer audible, Kelita hurriedly whispered,

"I am here to free you. In the package I threw down are three new files. Use them to cut through these window bars. They are heavy and you will have to remove two of them to make your way out. This will take time, for you must work carefully. I shall come again the fourth night from this at this same hour. Even if it is not very dark I shall come, for everything can be done right after the sentry has made his round; and before he makes it again we shall be out of sight and hearing if all goes well. I shall come under this window and make a low hiss. If you have not succeeded in filing the bars almost through, make the same sound yourself three times, and I shall go away. If the bars are sufficiently filed, throw down to me one end of the cord you will find also in the packages of files. Fasten it to one of the bars you

have not filed and I will climb up by it. Then we will wrench the bars away and you will have no trouble in making your escape. Be sure and file very cautiously so that the cuts you make will not easily be seen. Have patience and may the God of Israel bless and keep you."

Before Zatthu could say a word in answer to these directions, the dwarf had begun to climb down. He had been standing on the window sill in a bent and cramped position from which he was glad to relieve himself. How he had got over the high surrounding wall of the prison and how he had climbed up to a window fully ten feet above the ground filled Zatthu's mind with wonder. But wonder quickly gave way to anxiety, intense distressing anxiety, as he listened to see whether by some untoward movement the attention of the sentries was not roused. Several moments passed and there was no alarm. Then he heard the low chuckle that Kelita often gave to express joy or satisfaction and he was sure that the dwarf had reached a place of safety.

With a thankful heart Zatthu jumped down from his chair and groped for the package that had awakened him by its fall. It contained the cord, also the three files which had been so carefully wrapped in cloth of camel's hair that they had not been broken when thrown down upon the hard floor of the cell. By feeling of them Zatthu satisfied himself that their fine rasping edges had not been smoothed or worn by use and that they would bite viciously into the iron of the window bars.

"Jehovah has not forgotten me," he murmured thankfully. "Though He slay me yet will I not lose my faith in Him."

VIII

Good reason had Zatthu to wonder at Kelita's midnight appearance at the window of his cell. It had only been accomplished by persistency, skill and cunning.

The prison has already been spoken of as part of a large building in which was centered the business of governing Judæa and Samaria and keeping all Palestine in order. Here arms were stored, records and reports preserved, official work transacted, and grave offenders, like Zatthu, tried, sentenced and imprisoned.

Such being the important uses of the building, it was important to give it ample security. To this end a wall of brick some twelve feet high had been carried round the ample space in the centre of which the building stood. Only one gate gave admission through it and here sentries were always posted. Even at night when it was shut two soldiers were placed there and one of them made the round of the building twice every hour.

To surmount such a high wall and evade the sentries was no slight task. To climb up the prison wall to a window ten feet above the ground was an equally difficult one. Yet both of these feats Kelita had accomplished.

Undetected he had followed Zatthu and his escort all the way from Jerusalem to Cæsarea. In the latter city, he had found where Zatthu was confined by worming himself into the confidence of a legionary on duty about the administration building. Passing himself off as a cripple who was too helpless to excite suspicion, he got information he wanted when a prison cell would have been promptly given him had his true character been known.

Having located Zatthu, he had next to get to him. To do this he enlisted the friendly offices of one of his countrymen. Among the scattering Jews who had resorted to Cæsarea was

one Amariah who earned a livelihood by selling dried figs, sour wine and olive oil. He was himself a timid man and small of stature; but in his son Shobek the hunchback found the very ally he was in need of. This lad of twenty-two was a strapping fellow, over six feet tall and a Samson in strength. With him to aid his hazardous undertaking, Kelita went to the wall around the prison the night after Zatthu had been sentenced by Pilate.

Standing erect with his back against the wall, Shobek helped the hunchback to climb up and stand upon his shoulders. Then seizing him by the feet he lifted him steadily up till both his arms were straight. But Kelita was too short. Strain as he might he could not reach the top of the wall by a handbreadth.

But Kelita's crafty brain had provided against this failure. Another scheme was tried and worked successfully. Shobek had found for him a stout pole some ten feet long. To one end of this the hunchback clung, while, firmly grasping the other, the stalwart youth raised him till his hands could lay hold of the outer edge of the wall. This accomplished, he easily pulled himself up, such strength had he in his arms, and sat astride of this triumphantly surmounted barrier. The end of a rope he had been holding firmly in his teeth; the other end was grasped by Shobek while Kelita lowered himself into the area by means of it.

A more difficult task was now before him, that of climbing up to the window of Zatthu's cell. It was more difficult because he had to accomplish it unaided. The building was of brick; but it had been constructed for strength and the bricks had not been laid with perfect precision. There were protruding edges; moreover the cement was not of the solid enduring quality that usually distinguished Roman building. Shrinking away into a dark corner whenever he heard a sentry coming on his round, Kelita worked patiently at weak spots he found in the cement till he had made holes in which he

thrust nails he had brought with him. By means of these he made his way up to the window and had his interview with Zatthu. The nails he removed when he made his way down from the window.

True to his promise he came again at midnight after letting four days go by. Arriving at the prison wall he listened for the tread of the sentry. In a few moments it was plainly heard. The man completed his round without seeing anything to awaken suspicion and the sound of his footsteps ceased. Now was the time to act. It was bright starlight and what was to be done must be done promptly. There was no mantle of darkness to aid them. Everything depended on nimbleness and courage.

Shobek, his stalwart helper, was with him. Mounting the wall with the assistance of his ally in the same manner as before, Kelita let himself down into the area, stole noiselessly beneath Zatthu's window and gave a sharp hiss. Breathlessly he awaited the answer. Would it be the three sibilant sounds that could only send him away or the lowered cord? To his joy he saw the cord come down. Zatthu had then been successful. The bars were ready to be wrenched away. Rapidly he swung himself up to the window.

Yes, Zatthu had been successful. He had found that the files cut readily into the bars of the window and he had worked carefully and patiently at his task. Standing on his chair he had filed clean through two of the bars close to the window sill. This he had not found very difficult. The upper cuttings had given him much trouble. The top of the window was beyond his reach, and he had been obliged to stand on the sill as he filed and held himself there in a very painful position with one hand. And there was always the risk that his cell might be suddenly entered while he was so employed and that no matter how spry he was, he could not cover up what he was doing. But fortune favored him. Before the afternoon of the third day had gone by he had made the upper

filings as deep as he dared. All through the fourth day and the hours of darkness up to midnight he waited in a fever of impatience for Kelita's signal. Yet he was trustful all the while. He was sure the dwarf had been chosen by Jehovah to effect his deliverance.

The signal came. He was standing on his chair with the cord in his hand. Hastily he lowered it and pulled himself up onto the window sill. In a moment Kelita showed himself on the other side of the bars.

"Is it the two middle bars that have been filed?" inquired the hunchback.

"Yes. They have been filed clean through below. They will easily give way above when a hard wrench is given them."

"I will pull them away. I am better placed for doing it than you."

This said, Kelita seized one of the two and tugged hard at it. It came away altogether and he handed it to Zatthu, saying,

"Drop it carefully on the floor of your cell so as not to make too loud a noise. It might alarm the guards. Now I'll remove the other one."

Grasping the second one he gave a sharp pull at it, using the same force he had used before. But unhappily he put too much strength into the effort. Without knowing it, for the position he had to take when filing prevented him from seeing perfectly, Zatthu had cut this second bar almost wholly through. It was hanging only by an iron thread. So readily therefore did it come away when Kelita wrenched it, that the dwarf lost his balance and in spite of a frantic effort to save himself fell with the piece of iron down upon the paved area below.

Agile as a cat he landed on his feet unhurt; and as he was wearing a soft-soled shoe to make his tread noiseless, his own fall might possibly not have roused the guards. But he had not dared to keep his hold on the iron bar, fearing he might

land upon it and so injure himself that he could give no further aid to Zatthu. Down with a clang fell the bar on the stone pavement. Instantly were heard the footsteps of one of the guards, who came to see what was the matter.

"Sh-sh-sh," came the warning sound from the hunchback to the ear of Zatthu. "Leave everything to me."

Peering through the opening in the bars, which was large enough for him to thrust his head through it, Zatthu saw the hunchback crouch low at the corner of the building. Hurrying round the corner came the guard with his sword already drawn. But he had no chance to use it. Kelita's knife was in his throat almost before he was aware that he was facing an enemy. With a groan that was hardly more than a gurgle and which even in the night stillness Zatthu heard but faintly, he stumbled forward. But he was not allowed to fall. The hunchback caught him as he sank and lowered him to the ground so that his armor did not clang upon the stone paving. Immediately followed his whispered command to Zatthu.

"Now come down quickly by the rope before the other guard is upon us."

Even before the direction was given Zatthu had begun to clamber down. He had such confidence in Kelita that he had thought it wise to let him take the first steps that the emergency called for. But the situation, bad as it was, must be faced. This staunch deliverer could not be allowed to face it alone. In a moment Zatthu was by the hunchback's side.

Into his hand Kelita thrust the iron bar, which he had picked up, and said,

"Now we will go to the corner of the wall where the rope is hanging. Walk slowly and heavily. The other guard will think it is his comrade and will be less likely to suspect mischief than he would if he heard no noise at all. I shall make no noise, for he mustn't think there are two persons walking about."

Zatthu realized that the suggestion was shrewdly given.

Accordingly he walked with a leisurely and solid tread after the hunchback to the corner which was some twenty steps away. But their manœuvre, though adroitly planned, was not successful. The other sentry had not really suspected that anything was amiss. Those regular unhurried footsteps suggested no disturbance. He did not seem to be needed, but he was overpowered by curiosity. The gate was secure. He could leave it without risk. He would go and see what was happening.

So Zatthu and Kelita heard his approaching steps before they had got half way to the corner. Zatthu at once started to run.

"Don't run," whispered the dwarf hurriedly. "That would make him give the alarm. Our chance is in having to deal with him alone."

Hardly was this caution given before the sentry got sight of them. Their leisurely pace puzzled him, but he was too shrewd not to scent mischief. That neither of them was his comrade he realized on the instant because he did not catch the gleam of armor. So he darted forward, commanding them to halt and calling at the same time on the sharer of his watch.

"Where are you, Septimus?" he cried. "There's mischief here. Come this way!"

Hearing no answering footsteps, he grew suspicious as he ran; and crafty as all of Kelita's movements had been after his unfortunate fall from the window, they did not bring the full success they merited. The guard raised a loud cry of alarm as he ran.

"Help! Mischief! Help!" he shouted: and as he had had only some sixty paces to run, he was close upon them as the words left his mouth.

"Who are you and what are you doing here?" he demanded, his sword drawn and held ready for a fatal thrust.

As the guard put the question Kelita stole around to stab

him from behind. But the man was an old legionary and a wary fighter. He saw his danger. It was right by the wall encircling the prison that he had overtaken them. Into the very corner by which they had planned to make their escape he darted and continued to call loudly for help.

"Use the bar while I draw a thrust from him," whispered the dwarf, and with his long knife he rushed at the sentry as if to thrust him through. Almost did he receive a fatal wound for the soldier aimed a fierce blow at his head which he just succeeded in parrying as he dodged backward. But before the sword could be raised for another blow Zatthu shattered it with the iron prison bar. Dazed for an instant by this mishap, the sentry was off his guard, and Kelita darted in and slew him as he had slain his fellow guardsman by a stab in the throat where the armor gave scant protection.

But the situation was desperate. The fallen sentry's cry for help had been heard and heeded. Just inside the prison door slept a decurion with half a dozen men who had their weapons by them and who were in readiness for just such an emergency as this. The decurion had not been sleeping soundly. He had heard the sentry's first cry for aid, and by the time the man had fallen he had aroused the entire guard and with his men close at his heels was hastening to the scene of trouble.

Kelita's one thought now was to ensure Zatthu's escape. Himself he gave up as lost. But much to his dismay Zatthu had rushed to the spot where the first sentry had fallen and possessed himself of his sword. A precious moment had been lost; but possibly there was yet time.

"This way, quick. Over the wall. You have just time to save yourself," cried the hunchback.

"And leave you here to be killed? Never! I am going to die with you."

Kelita gave a groan of despair. He would have pleaded against this sacrifice and the consequent ruin of the Sacred

Cause, but he had no opportunity. The decurion and his men were now upon them. The two Hebrews stood together in the angle of the wall, seeing no chance for life but determined to sell it as dearly as possible.

But not at once were they assailed. The decurion saw no reason for killing them instantly without parley. They were two against seven. It would be better to make captives of them; for surely they would surrender rather than be cut down.

"Who are you?" he said, advancing a step or two toward them but carefully guarding his person.

"Ah, I see," he continued, as he peered at them through the gloom. "You are Zatthu, the prisoner brought here from Jerusalem, and a friend who thought he could set you free. By Pollux, he came pretty near succeeding. But you see you are caught. We are seven against two. Give yourselves up. It is sure death if you don't."

"And sure death if we do," was Zatthu's answer. "We do not care to be executed by Pilate. We are going to die here. Come on! We are ready."

But more than ever did the decurion wish to capture rather than kill them now that he had recognized the prisoner who had been inciting rebellion at Jerusalem. Pilate he was sure would wish to have this notable character delivered up to him alive. So he fell back a step or two to instruct his men just how to make the attack, and as he did so he was a little off his guard. Even through the dim light Kelita saw his opportunity, darted forward like a springing panther and with his long knife slashed savagely at the decurion's throat. Just in time to avoid a death wound the officer slightly swerved. He received a deep cut in the cheek and neck; but he was not disabled and his fiercest wrath was roused.

"I will send this shorter knave straight to Hades," he said to his men. "Do you close in upon the taller one and lay him low, but do not kill him. Pilate shall be his judge."

So saying he rushed at Kelita who was again standing with his back to the wall by Zatthu's side. The decurion did not dare to thrust in the deadly Roman fashion, for he feared an answering thrust from the knife of the nimble Hebrew. It was a sweeping side stroke that he gave, and so mighty a one that it would have nearly hewn Kelita in two had he received its force. But he dropped to the ground as it was delivered; the decurion's sword smote the brick wall so fiercely that it was dashed out of his hand; and the next moment he himself was lying flat upon the ground. For Kelita seized one of his legs, toppled him over, and then plunged his knife deep into his breast.

Even in the brief time that this action had taken, the other Romans had rushed upon Zatthu and but for most timely and unexpected assistance he would have been disarmed and overpowered before Kelita could have given him support.

It was from the tall and stalwart Shobek that the much needed succor came. All this time he had been guarding the rope on the outer side of the prison wall, he had with ready wit taken in about all that had been happening and had realized that the only hope lay in himself the moment he heard Zatthu refuse to surrender.

He must act and for action he was ready. With his long stout pole he had pried up paving stones and piled them so high that by standing on the top of the heap he could just place his hands on the top of the high brick wall. Onto the wall he pulled himself up when he heard Zatthu defy the decurion, and his pole he drew up after him. To avoid being noticed he had mounted the wall away from the scene of contention. He was therefore unheard and unobserved as he lowered his pole and dropped down himself into the enclosure.

Stealing forward a few paces, he found himself in the rear of the six Romans just as they were beginning their onset upon Zatthu. Like a flash Shobek dashed after them with his pole for a weapon. And a deadly weapon it was. With a

mighty side swing he brought it crashing upon the backs of two of the soldiers and they fell to the ground disabled — dead perhaps, but that was to be discovered later. Two of the others, startled by this sudden assault in their rear, turned to face this death-dealing intruder. With swords ready to thrust and slay they rushed at him, but only to their undoing. To avoid close quarters Shobek had darted back the moment they turned. As they came at him he swung again with his terrible weapon and one of the two fell headlong with his side crushed in and but a few moments of life before him. In falling he hit his comrade, who staggered, recovered himself and then dropped dead as the pole descended with terrific force upon his unprotected head. For so sudden and so urgent had been the call for help that the decurion and his men had rushed out of the prison, sword in hand, but without helmet, shield, or breastplate. That they could possibly need armor they had not dreamed.

Darting forward to dispose of the rest of the Romans, Shobek found that his aid was no longer required. Kelita had no sooner disabled the decurion than he sprang to the assistance of Zatthu, now sorely pressed by the two soldiers who had led the attack upon him. Sorely pressed indeed he was, for his assailants realized that in some strange way things were going against them and they closed in, not to capture but to kill. Two against one, and Zatthu was a good but not a highly skilled swordsman. The end would have come quickly had not Kelita thrust his knife home into each of them from behind — but into the second only after he had given Zatthu a serious wound in the side.

“You came in the nick of time, Shobek,” said Kelita as their tall deliverer loomed up in the gloom. “Had you arrived a few moments later you would have found your two countrymen dead with some Roman corpses around them to show that they had met a brave man’s end, and then you could have done nothing but avenge them.”

"Hardly that, I fear, if I had had to stand alone against half a dozen Roman soldiers. And perhaps it would not have been worth while. I am no lover of bloodshed. But this is no time for speech. Your friend here is hurt. I must see what I can do for him."

So saying he gave his whole attention to Zatthu who was indeed in a sorry plight. For a moment Kelita stood by to assist him, but seeing that his hand was deft he turned away to make sure that none of the Romans could continue the struggle.

He found they were all too utterly disabled to show fight; but the first two whom Shobek had laid low were writhing in pain and these he instantly dispatched. All of the others were dead or dying but the decurion, who, desperately but perhaps not fatally wounded, begged for mercy.

"You shall have the mercy you would have given," replied Kelita; and he gave him such a savage thrust that the man gave one groan and expired.

"That was a foul deed," exclaimed Zatthu, who, suffering though he was, had heard and heeded the piteous moan.

"A necessary one," replied Kelita. "The man might have summoned strength enough to shout for help, and who knows how many soldiers there may be still asleep inside the prison? But now to work and instantly. Is your wound bleeding?"

"Only a little. This good friend of yours and mine has staunched it."

"We must get you over the wall and it will hurt you. Can you bear it?"

"Of course. Are we not serving Jehovah?"

"True. I should not have doubted. But, alas! I do not see how the deed is to be done."

"I do," said Shobek. "Give me your knife."

With this he cut his own tunic into broad strips and three of these he knotted loosely about Zatthu, one just below the armpits, one about the waist and one just a little further

down. Under these three bandages he passed the cord by means of which Kelita had mounted to the prison window, took the two ends in his teeth and mounted the wall by the rope placed for that very purpose to ensure Zatthu's escape. Then he carefully pulled up Zatthu, while Kelita assisted from below and kept the wounded man from swaying against the wall.

Zatthu bore the excruciating pain without murmuring, but he could not help giving a sigh of relief when Shobek finally brought him to the top and laid him upon the wall.

"Now Kelita," said the resourceful youth in a low, clear voice, "throw the pole over the wall, for we may yet want it, and climb up yourself."

Quickly the hunchback made the ascent, and, still directed by Shobek, let himself down on the other side. This accomplished, Shobek lowered Zatthu as carefully as he had drawn him up and Kelita received him in his arms and laid him gently down at the foot of the wall.

Shobek then dropped lightly down, bent compassionately over Zatthu and regretted that there was yet more suffering before him.

"I am going to take you up in my arms and carry you," he said. "That is the only way and I will make it as easy for you as I possibly can."

"I do not question that," said Zatthu, "but where are you going to take me?"

"To my father's, of course."

"No," said Kelita, "to the house of my friend Binni the tailor. He will gladly shelter Zatthu and his wound will keep him here in the city for some time. Meanwhile those cursed Romans, who are always keen in tracking those whom they wish to punish, will ransack the city to find Zatthu and his deliverers. You with your big, tall body will at once be under suspicion; but they would never think of little stooping Binni as a man who helped to do nine Romans to death."

"Perhaps you are right," said Shobek after thinking a moment. "But are you sure Binni will want to take in and hide a man the Romans are hunting?"

"I am sure of him as I should be of you."

"Very well, then. To Binni's we will go. I will lead the way: do you follow with the rope and pole. We must leave no clues behind us."

So saying Shobek lifted Zatthu in his arms and with careful steps started for the tailor's house, with Kelita close behind him.

IX

Nearly two months later three men were resting on the summit of Mount Carmel close by a path that crossed the range and connected Samaria with Galilee. It was the noon hour. The sun's rays were piercing, for even in the month of Zif, which corresponds to May of the Roman calendar, it is warm at mid-day in Palestine. But a refreshing breeze blew in from the not distant Mediterranean; the trees that grew abundantly on Carmel offered shady and inviting spots. Beneath the protecting foliage of an ancient fir tree the three wayfarers lay and talked, to all appearances free from care and pressing duties.

Care-free for the moment they were, yet they had escaped from dangers and alarms, and a task the most resolute might shrink from was before them. For these were the very three whom we last saw fighting for their lives against desperate odds; and Zatthu whom the other two follow devotedly is still on fire to accomplish his great purpose. But what they have been through and what they see before them will appear from their own conversation.

"Has your wound given you no trouble Zatthu?" inquired Kelita.

"None whatever. It is entirely healed."

"I am much relieved. I feared the rapid pace in the warm sun would irritate it. Ah, that was a deep stab. Many men would have died from it."

"It was not to be. My time had not come. Jehovah has work for me."

"I am sure He has. It was He that kept them from finding you when they searched. That was a cunning place of hiding Binni contrived. Yet they came so often I thought they would discover it."

"I don't think," said Shobek, "their search was very thor-

ough or that they put any heart into it. As a matter of course they hunted through every house in Cæsarea that was occupied by one of our people. But they never doubted that you and those who rescued you got out of the city the same night you escaped from prison."

"Ah, how puzzled they must have been!" exclaimed Kelita with a chuckle. "Nine Roman legionaries as dead as a cast-off snake skin, and not a trace of those who had so insulted mighty Rome!"

"There was only one way of explaining it," said Shobek. "They thought a band came down from the mountains, overpowered and killed the soldiers and went back the way they came. This, you know, was the story I heard about the streets. I got just that from soldiers I talked with now and then."

"Short work those soldiers would have made of you," said Kelita, "had they known the hand you had in the business. It makes me laugh to think how they were looking everywhere for the enemy who had done such unheard-of mischief; and there you were going about among them all the time."

"And they would be more anxious than ever to find you," remarked Zatthu, "if they discovered that it was you who got us out of the city. I did not see how it was going to be done, the gates were so carefully guarded. But you managed it easily enough."

"A lucky thing it was that Meshullam was allowed to build his house so near the wall," said Kelita. "It was a scant eight feet across, and that trusty pole of yours spanned the space completely after you had spliced that long piece of stout oak onto it. I did fear it would give way though when you pulled yourself across, hand by hand, with your long legs dangling down. Even my weight made it bend quite a little."

"And when you were on the wall," said Zatthu, "you pulled me up so easily! I really think I could have gone across as

you and Kelita did, but you were afraid the strain might open my wound; so I let you haul me up, as I knew your strength was quite equal to it."

"What is strength of body?" said Shobek modestly. "It is your mind that will make the cause succeed."

"If it really does succeed," commented Kelita somewhat dejectedly. "But what can you do now, Zatthu? You cannot go back to Jerusalem. You would be recognized and put to death. And how can you accomplish anything in Galilee?"

"Why should I not do everything my heart desires in Galilee?"

"It is so far from Jerusalem, so far from our Temple. It would seem as if any great movement for our people must start from Jerusalem."

Zatthu did not reply at once. His wound and his long confinement had made his face look drawn and pale. The tinge of melancholy that it always showed was deepened; at first glance he might have seemed dispirited. Yet his eyes had lost none of their fire, and no one that gazed into them could doubt that he was full of energy and hope. When he had gathered his thoughts and spoke, it was with the same glow of feeling and the same deep moving voice that had so often given his words a thrilling power.

"It was here on Carmel," he said, "that Elijah made the fire come down from heaven and consume the burnt-sacrifice. Where the faithful servant of Jehovah is, there will Jehovah be. If my cause is righteous, it will prosper, in Galilee as well as in Jerusalem. You are faint-hearted, Kelita, and it is faintness of heart that brings Jehovah's wrath. When you thrust a Roman through, as your unhallowed creed bids you, you thrust with all your might. Can you not have the same faith in Jehovah that you have in your own right arm? He will guide me and be my stay. If we trust in Him all will be well. Prudence must not indeed be thrown to the winds. Elijah hid from Ahab at the brook Cherith. It would be folly

for me to go to Jerusalem to be seized and put to death. But Jehovah will be with me as I go about in Galilee and will put fire into my words. And I shall touch the hearts of the people there. Do not doubt it. The men of Galilee have more than once risen against Rome. They will do so again, and their rising this time will be like the flood that fills the valley or the wind that levels the grain."

"Yes," cried Shobek, "it will be even so. When the men of Galilee hear you, they will cry as one man to be led against the Roman legions."

Silence followed for a time. Zatthu seemed lost in reverie. His two companions did not venture to intrude upon his thought, but gazed upon the plain below them and on to Cæsarea, whose turrets, distant though they were, gleamed in the unclouded sunlight. On the edge of the blue Mediterranean, the city was like a jewel of amber on the border of a deep blue robe.

"It makes me laugh," said Shobek softly, "to think how furious Pilate would be if he knew we were sitting safely here and looking down on his city. I almost feel sorry for him, he would be so beside himself with rage."

"Don't feel sorry for a Roman, Shobek," said Kelita in the same low voice. "He wouldn't be sorry for you if he got hold of you and found out what you had done. He'd crucify you and laugh at your misery."

"I suppose he would, though I don't understand how any one can take pleasure in seeing another suffer. Did you ever see a man crucified, Kelita?"

"Once. A poor fellow who had taken to the mountains to rob and murder, and got caught."

"Did he suffer much?"

"Of course; but he wouldn't show it. He grinned horribly, and cursed the Romans till he made them angry. Then he spat at them and cursed harder than ever."

"No wonder. If hate could do anything, the Romans

would melt before us as the sand is washed by the waves. But I don't feel any hatred for them. They are men like ourselves. Why should we hate them?"

"Because they are Jehovah's enemies."

"Do you think Jehovah hates them?"

"Of course He does. Don't they worship graven images?"

"They don't know any better."

"That doesn't make any difference. I suppose the Canaanites and all the tribes that worshipped Baal did not know any better, but Jehovah wanted them killed to a man just the same."

"It's all very strange to me. When we rise, I'll kill all the Romans I can, but I shall feel sorry for them when I do it."

"Did you feel sorry for the gnats you killed while we were crossing the plain this morning?"

"Not a bit, not a bit! How can one feel sorry for an insect? I really do pity a snake though when I kill it and see it squirm. The poor thing doesn't like to give up its life any more than I should like to give up mine."

"You were never cut out to be a soldier, Shobek."

"You are wrong, Kelita," said Zatthu, who for some moments had been following the conversation. "Shobek with his kind heart makes me think of David who twice spared Saul, but was the only man in all Israel who dared face the giant, Goliath."

Kelita was too discomfited by the illustration to be able to frame a reply. So Zatthu went on and for a long time held the attention of his two followers while he unfolded the meaning of the scriptures as he understood them. Jehovah, he felt sure, hated only evil doers; and it was them only that He wished to see destroyed root and branch.

"Very well then," said Kelita doggedly when he had finished, "we will destroy these Romans root and branch because they are evil doers. Make the people hate these enemies of Jehovah who have their feet on our necks, or they won't rise."

“They will rise because Jehovah calls them,” answered Zatthu with kindling eye. “They will rise as they rose of old when they heard the trumpet of Gideon, and nothing shall withstand their might. But the sun is lower and the heat less fierce. Let us make our way down into Galilee and find shelter somewhere for the night. Perhaps we may fall in with a band of robbers and share what they have. It is the injustice and the cruelty of Rome that have made many of these men lawless and desperate. I expect to make friends with them and bring them under our banner when the time comes. David called such about him. Why should not I?”

“But follow me down the pathway. I would best go first. The pace that Shobek would set might be a little too fast for a man who was wounded nearly to death not long ago.”

X

Mount Carmel being less than two thousand feet high they were not long in reaching the road that skirted its base. Taking it, they turned to the right and went on in a southeasterly direction. They were sure that they would come in time to a village or to some stray hamlet where they could find a rude but hearty hospitality.

The Carmel range forms for a considerable distance the boundary between Samaria and Galilee. As it stretches on however from the coast to the southeast, its elevation falls away in places and its outlines are less bold. Its summit is not a continuous ridge. Here and there it becomes a series of hills with deep clefts or ravines between. But in ancient times it was everywhere thickly wooded. Hiding places innumerable could the hunted find on its well screened sides.

The road that our travelers pursued was now straight, and now winding as it rounded some projecting spur of the range. It was just as they were approaching one of these spurs and a clear view of the road before them was cut off, that they heard the unmistakable sounds of strife. What the trouble was they could not tell; but loud cries and the clash of steel told them that they were nearing a fray of some description.

All of them were armed. It would have been folly to escape from a hostile stronghold without the means of self-defence. Kelita had the long knife he used so effectively. Zatthu and Shobek had each gained possession of a Roman broadsword. With these weapons drawn they rushed forward, ready to take part in what seemed to be a fiercely contested struggle.

On the run they made the bend in the road. Then they stood still a moment to take in the meaning of the conflict that was going on before them. Even the warrior, who rushes into battle as instinctively as the dog pursues the hare, needs

a reason for taking sides in a fray. But it needed only a glance to show the character of this encounter. In the road stood three well-laden camels. A few men, one of whom was undoubtedly their owner, were guarding them and their burdens from a band of highwaymen.

The conflict was spirited. There were but six of the defenders while their opponents were twice that number. But half of them had nothing but stout cudgels, while those who were resisting them had shields and well-tempered swords. Well-tempered they certainly seemed to be, for in the onset which the robbers had made two of their number had been badly hurt and were crawling away from the road. This taste of success called forth a cheer from the defenders. Their assailants answered with a cry of rage and attacked more vigorously than ever. Side by side in a circle stood the six. At them again and again the highwaymen rushed and incessant was the shower of blows from sword and cudgel upon the rigid row of shields. Under the heavy and repeated tramping the dust rose in clouds and enveloped the combatants.

Ready as Zatthu and his two friends had been to render help where help was surely needed, they had with one accord stood still and watched when they saw what was going on. The contestants seemed evenly matched. What need to interfere? True, the smaller party was defending property against outlaws. Justice was on their side. But with these outlaws Zatthu, as has been shown, had sympathy. His comrades shared his feeling. Hence, as the outlaws seemed to be getting worsted in the fray, why make the defence stronger? Besides, the owner of the camels and their burdens might be a Roman.

The outlaws really did appear to be getting worsted. In their second furious onslaught, two more of them were disabled and obliged to withdraw from the fight. To be sure one of the defenders was wounded; but his comrades took

him in the centre of their circle and still presented an unbroken front to their assailants. They were now five against eight. The victory was so far with them.

This the outlaws seemed to realize. They drew off a little way and their leader began to parley. He declared himself ready to give up the battle if one of the three camels was abandoned to him. This proposition being refused, he argued insistently in favor of it, threatening to keep up the fight till darkness came, unless these terms were accepted.

But the parley was only a ruse, as was plain to the trio who stood watching. While the leader of the outlaws was talking, one of his men, who was nearly as large as Shobek in stature, had procured from the woods which hemmed the road a fallen log some ten feet long and nearly half a foot in thickness. When he appeared with this upon his shoulder, the outlaw captain cried,

“At them again, comrades. As they won’t let us have one camel, we’ll take them all.”

With five of his band he rushed again against the small circle that defied him. The other two were to manipulate the log, the impact of which would have well nigh annihilated the defence. For the scheme was a crafty one. While the six outlaws kept their opponents busy and shut off their view, the other two were to poise the log on their shoulders and charge with it at full speed. At just the right moment the assailants would step aside and two or three of the defenders would have gone down in a heap.

But Zatthu saw through the scheme the moment the log was brought out of the woods and he determined instantly to baffle it. To see gallant men who were only guarding their own rights borne down by sheer brutality he could not endure.

“Shobek,” he said, “you see what those knaves are going to do with that log. Run quick and stop them. You help

him, Kelita. I will go and parley with the captain of these fellows and convince him he had better give up the fight.

With Kelita at his heels, Shobek hastened to do Zatthu's bidding. There was joy in his heart as he did so. He too was moved to wrath when he saw the trick the outlaws meant to play and he was only too glad to discomfit them.

But he acted prudently and warily. He had no thought of confronting the two ruffians with the log and opposing his brute strength to theirs. He wanted the satisfaction of spoiling their plan just as it was on the eve of success. Wholly absorbed by the part they were to play, the two outlaws did not notice him or his movements. Balancing the log upon their shoulders, they waited till the defending party was too busily engaged to observe them and then they began to run forward as fast as their heavy burden would allow. It was at this moment that Shobek gave them a very unpleasant surprise. Darting up from behind he vigorously shoved the log they were by no means easily carrying. Disaster followed quick and sure. The two outlaws pitched headlong and only just succeeded in keeping their unwieldy load from falling on top of them. In an instant Shobek seized the man of smaller stature, who was however by no means a man of slight build, placed him alongside of the sturdier bandit, and, with one hand on the neck of each pinioned them both to the ground. That viselike grip could not be shaken off. Kelita had all the time been standing by ready to give help as needed. But there was no moment when he had even to lift a finger to aid his stalwart ally.

It was at this stage that Zatthu interfered. The outlaws had made no impression on their opponents, but instead had suffered further loss; for another of their number had fallen badly wounded. And seeing the two detailed to assault with the log lying apparently helpless, they stood discomfited and yet not quite willing to relinquish an effort that had promised so rich a reward.

"You are beaten," said Zatthu, drawing near to their leader and addressing him. "And deservedly you are beaten, for it was a foul trick that you were going to play. I hope you are man enough to own that it was a knavish and dishonest kind of warfare you were going to wage and to feel ashamed of it."

"Who are you and why are you meddling?" replied the leader, turning sullenly to Zatthu. "Keep your hands off! It isn't your affair."

"I am a Hebrew. Are you one?"

"I was so born. Sometimes I have cursed the day that I was."

"Nay, do not curse but bless the day that made you one of God's chosen race. And use your sword against its enemies, not against men who defend what is their own."

"And starve the while? I'm not a fool. Go your ways and let me go mine."

"You had best go your ways now. You see it is useless to continue the fight. We are eight sound men to your five, for that stout friend of mine has two of your followers held so fast that they can do no mischief. So, off into the hills from which you came down. But I shall find you some time and show you a better way to use your sword and a better way to keep off hunger. What is your name?"

"Barabbas."

"And mine is Zatthu. Remember; you will hear from me again."

The baffled and angry outlaw saw that it would be folly to prolong the struggle. He told his men to follow him and started up the mountain side. At a signal from Zatthu, Shobek released the two whom he had been holding down and who looked at him wonderingly as they rose to their feet. The larger one especially gazed hard at the youth who had so easily discomfited him, as if he were astonished at meeting a man more powerful than himself; for that iron clasp which

he was still feeling had given him a vast respect for Shobek's physical prowess. Then, after surveying their captor for a moment, they hastened after their leader and the rest of the band.

As Barabbas turned his face toward the mountain, the man, who had been wounded and encircled by the other defenders, with difficulty made his way toward Zatthu, supported on either side.

"By Hercules," he said extending his hand, which Zatthu hastened to clasp warmly, "that was a friendly deed. That vile scheme of theirs would have wrought our utter downfall but for your most timely interference. Yes," he continued, while he looked at Shobek who now joined them, "I may well say 'By Hercules'; for this strong-limbed young man brings to mind the hero who wrestled with Antæus."

"You are a Greek, I presume," said Zatthu, "from the speech you use."

"Yes, I was born in the city that was great under Pericles long before Rome laid her strong hand on the nations. But for seven years I have lived in this alien land, and during the last three of them my home has been in Capernaum, and long will be if all goes well."

"In Capernaum. Then you still have far to go and you seem to be badly hurt. You must let my companions and myself go with you and give you whatever help you may need."

"Your aid will be most grateful. My wound is not dangerous, I think, but it is severe. That villain of a Barabbas got through my guard by a clever feint and his sword pierced my side. I shall have to be carried the rest of the way."

"My friend Kelita here knows how to heal wounds as well as to give them. Let him attend to yours."

"I will gladly submit to his care. My servant Charmides has a rough knowledge of surgery; but you who have shown your good will so effectively will, I am sure, not do anything

amiss in dealing with this provoking injury. I am an old hand with the sword and it exasperates me to think I let that villain get the better of me."

Kelita really had a good knowledge of medicine and surgery; and while he was dressing the wound, which though serious was not alarming, the Greek continued to converse with Zatthu. He was faint and in pain, but he bore his suffering with fortitude.

"Whither are you and your companions bound?" he asked.

"To no one place. It will not put us out to go with you as long as you may need us."

"Fortunate men, to be able to go in any direction you please! I do not seem to remember the time when I could start out without any goal to reach. I am a trader, you see; and the man of trade always has an end to pursue."

"I suppose you are the owner of these camels and their burden."

"Yes. I am on my way from Ptolemais where a ship from Tyre brought me a valuable lot of merchandise — silks from the far east; rugs that would tempt the wealthy to break the Mosaic commandment against covetousness; veils daintily woven; and fabrics colored with all the shades of the rich Tyrian dye. It is that precious stuff that the camels are bearing and that that crew of robbers wanted to get away from me. But with your assistance I am now sure I shall bring my goods home to Capernaum."

"But why do you take such a roundabout way? The direct road from Ptolemais to Capernaum would have carried you through Cana, much further north."

"True; but it is not all of these stuffs that I wish to carry so far. There are small traders in Jenin and other villages I am to pass through who are customers of mine and who will make these packs grow lighter before I reach my home. But your friend, whose touch I at once perceived to be skilful, has finished his task; and my servants have got a stretcher

ready for me, I see. So we will now push on. We shall have to go very slowly, but I hope we may reach the village of Megiddo tonight as I had planned. But before we start shall we not exchange names? Your own I know, for I heard you declare it to the robber chief. But I do not know that of this. . . .”

“This friend of mine, whose stature is short but whose arms are powerful enough to make his dagger a very deadly weapon, is named Kelita. My tall and stalwart follower is Shobek.”

“And I am Timon Aristarchus. The Roman poet Vergil, whom I greatly admire, says the Greeks are not to be trusted even when bearing gifts; but you will find we are only too glad to recognize faithful service. Let us proceed.”

XI

So frequently did the route to Capernaum carry Aristarchus and his caravan through hilly country, where robbers might possibly be encountered, that he was not willing to part with his three efficient helpers till he reached his own city.

Zatthu, from whom the other two readily took directions, was quite willing to accommodate him. He liked the genial friendly Greek and would have been glad to get better acquainted with him as they traveled together. But this the wound of Aristarchus made impossible. Even the very slow pace adopted made it very painful. Only a man of rare strength of will would have been willing to proceed before it was healed. But Zatthu did find opportunity to tell Aristarchus privately that he was a fugitive from Roman justice. He thought this only honorable. What exigencies might arise, what persons they might meet while journeying together, no one could say. Roman soldiers might encounter them and question them sharply. Zatthu and his two comrades might suddenly have to flee for safety to the mountains.

Aristarchus was not in the least perturbed by this intelligence.

"Tell me the whole story," he said, summoning his strength and steeling himself against weariness and pain.

Very briefly Zatthu gave an account of his arrest in Jerusalem for seditious utterances and of his escape from the prison at Cæsarea.

"You did well," said Aristarchus when he had finished. "The Greeks fought for freedom. Why should not the Jews? I am no friend of the Romans, though I have friends among them. I only wish you might succeed, but I fear your cause is hopeless. No nation in all the world can stand against Rome. But I cannot talk more. I am too tired."

Before they entered Capernaum Aristarchus summoned Zatthu to the litter on which he was borne.

"I owe you and your friends not my property only, but my life," he said. "I wish to make full recognition of this, yet I cannot offer you money. A man who has such a cause at heart as you have does not accept a money reward for saving life. How about your friends?"

"I will ask them; yet I know their answer would be the same as mine. We do not draw our swords for pay. That would be the act of hirelings."

"But I must do something to show you how grateful I am. You must all three come to my house and eat of my salt. Till you have done so, I shall feel that my debt is too heavy to be borne."

"But I am an outlaw. The same is really true of my comrades. You must not receive us under your roof. You would get yourself into trouble."

"No one in Capernaum knows you. Your own people would not in any case betray you, and while you are my guests you would not be stirring up sedition so as to make it manifest that I was harboring an enemy of Rome. So, come for a day or two at any rate. You need have no fear whatever on my account. The Roman centurion in command at Capernaum is a staunch friend of mine."

"He would be less staunch, I fear, if he knew whom you were urging to take shelter under your roof."

"Not a whit. His heart is as big as the sea. If he found you, he would arrest you; but he would have naught against me for taking you in, for I am no Roman. He would not think less of you for being a true patriot."

"Yet he would send me back to Pilate to be put to death?"

"Yes, he would do that. As a Roman officer he could do no less."

"Would that he were not a Roman. I should like such a man for a friend. But as he is what you say, I will partake

of your hospitality for a brief space. For my two friends I cannot speak; but I will go and ascertain their wishes."

In a few moments Zatthu brought back from Kelita and Shobek a courteous but firm refusal. Kelita had a cousin in Capernaum by the name of Zichri, a dealer in shawls and other garments made of camel's hair, with whom he could find lodging; and Shobek could also be sure of a hearty reception. The hunchback was too intensely and narrowly Jewish to be willing to be the guest of an alien. And how Zatthu could do this, he was not able to understand. But fanatical in his devotion to his country, Zatthu was no mere narrow-minded zealot. He had not liked the genial Aristarchus, but he thought he might find him useful. Roman rule did not command his admiration. Might he not help to overthrow it and place that of Judæa in its stead? And what if he was a Greek? He might still be a friend and a loyal one. Did not Hiram have the most amicable relations with great King Solomon?

PART II
THE DAWNING LIGHT

I

Capernaum was a thriving city in the days when Pontius Pilate ruled Judæa. It stood at the northern end of the Lake of Galilee and stretched for a considerable distance along its shore. In it were found all the types of the most vigorous Jewish activity. Here were the cultured Pharisee and the learned scribe. Here were the merchant, the petty trader, the maker and repairer of small articles of daily use, the artisan and the fisherman. The poor and the prosperous were alike found here; together they worshipped in the synagogue. On the lake below floated the craft of the men of substance and of the toilers for daily bread; and when the sudden squall brought danger, it was the rich as well as the poor who watched from the city's edge the boats that labored with the white-capped waves.

A populous and thriving city and a thoroughly oriental one. Silently and timidly veiled women, not so numerous but that the eye was arrested by sight of one, walked through the narrow streets. The vendor of small wares sang the praises of his goods with the liveliness of the rich eastern fancy as he traversed the thoroughfares with head erect and unmistakable pride in his calling. In the booth where finery was on sale the proprietor noted keenly every passer-by and was as quick to see the smallest display in interest as is the seagull to detect the flash of fins near the surface of the water. A master psychologist he, who knows how to take advantage of even the most hidden yearning for acquisition. To stop and inquire the price of any article is almost fatal. And equally discerning and intuitive is his commercial brother who presides at a stall in the fish market. The fish are brought up daily from the lake on purpose to be sold; he is himself an unworthy descendant of father Jacob if he cannot sell them. Yet the buyer is a descendant of father Jacob too,

and what a rare contest of wits there is when the two come together! A lively place indeed the fish market becomes when the catch has been plentiful, purchasers are numerous and trade is brisk. Not a fish sold without ample discussion of its weight and worth; yet the fishes all make their way into the homes of Capernaum and the surrounding country.

And if less lively, not less interesting is the scene that daily takes place in some one of the more open spaces of the city when the story-teller, squatting on the ground with his legs crossed beneath him, holds forth to the group that is gathered by his fluent speech. Here is the man who has brought in his produce from the country on his donkey and who embraces this opportunity to carry away from the city something besides a small addition to his scanty hoard of silver. Here is the trader whose thirst for an intellectual treat has made him leave his booth for a few moments in charge of his alert and well-trained son. Pharisee and scribe, interested though patronizing and disdainful, are to be seen on the outskirts of the listening throng. And here are Syrians, Greeks, and other aliens, whom the growing and thriving city has drawn within its pale. Clad in both gay and sombre colored garments the listeners stand and drink in the fanciful tale. For full of fancy it is sure to be. If it is a love story, it has as many tropes and metaphors as the Song of Solomon. If it recites the prowess of heroes like the great Maccabees, it makes them beings too great and glorious for mortal guise. If it caters to the mind's eternal craving for mystery and magic, it constructs a supernal land of marvel, incantation and romance. Whatever the story is, it is told with the art of the born narrator, and it holds the audience with its spell. Gain, toil, petty grievances and the world's commotions are all forgotten. The dreaming Asiatic has been wafted into the land of dreams. He is in bliss.

Yes, oriental, thoroughly oriental is the atmosphere of Capernaum. And yet it is thoroughly a Jewish city. Its

people, in spite of the foreign element, is essentially a Jewish people, filled with an over-weening pride in the splendor of their history. The years of dissension, of exile, of subjection to the passing Eastern dynasties, were not remembered. All those who had Hebrew blood in them gloried in the Hebrew name, the Hebrew tradition. They despised the tetrarch Herod Antipas; they loathed the Roman power that was behind him. Their hearts were as true to Jerusalem as were those of the exiles through their long captivity at Babylon. They would fain see it as great once more as it was under Solomon. If need be they would fight for it. Orientals they were, but not like the tame-spirited Persians who would kiss the rod that smote them. Alert, defiant, watchful, they were waiting for the opportunity to rise. The wrongs they suffered were ever on their minds. In low voices they spoke of them when they met upon the streets. In their homes they vented their hatred for the rule that vexed their souls. As they wended their way from the synagogue on the Sabbath or after week-day gatherings, they looked about them to see if a Roman was near; and if the detested legionary was nowhere in sight, they reviled the imperial city and its minion, the sensual Herod.

Such was the city into which Zatthu was now to enter. A promising field it would seem for sowing the seeds of rebellion. What a bounteous harvest might be reaped from them! But Zatthu did not know that before his coming seeds were sown that would ripen into a diviner harvest.

II

Aristarchus' house was situated at the eastern end of Capernaum. Consequently, as he and his caravan approached from the west, they had to skirt or traverse the whole city to reach their destination. To avoid the gaze of the curious they skirted it. True, Aristarchus mingled freely with its Jewish citizens. That three Jews were walking among its armed retainers would have seemed in no way extraordinary. But Shobek's tall figure would have drawn attention. Kelita, through the very contrast, might have been critically noted. Naturally then Zatthu himself would have invited close inspection. And if his figure was not imposing, his face and his spirited carriage, once seen, were not easily forgotten. So it seemed best to give the gossip monger no opportunity.

Even before they arrived at the border of the city Kelita and Shobek detached themselves from the caravan. Not without some heaviness of heart they said goodbye to Zatthu; but as they took their separate way and followed a street that would lead them into the heart of the city, they looked back smilingly and waved a message of comradeship and staunch devotion.

The caravan continued its slow way, encountering few wayfarers. It was the noon hour. The sun was hot. A hush rested upon the city. Turning at last into the street that led to the house of Aristarchus, men and beasts alike hastened their steps in anticipation. The perspiring litter-bearers were glad that their toil was soon to end; the camels gave unmistakable signs of satisfaction. Though to Zatthu the ground was unfamiliar, he did not need the assurance given him by one of the serving men that they were at the end of their journey. On the brow of the declivity that rimmed the Lake of Galilee stood a house with pillars in its front; while

all around were the low, flat-roofed block-shaped houses that were found all over Palestine. In his architecture as in his mental habits Aristarchus was true to the land that gave him birth.

“I want my wife and daughter to see you and thank you for saving my life.”

These words the generous-minded Greek had uttered when he had insisted on bestowing hospitality; and Zatthu accordingly knew whom he was to find in the pillared mansion. But the kindly wish had raised no pleasant anticipations in his mind. The wife and the daughter would appear. They would say ‘I thank you’ with the shyness and formality that enwrap the oriental woman like a garment impervious to the sun and the frost of intercourse. Just this much they would say and then bury themselves in seclusion. For intellectual recreation, for companionship, for an occasional social hour Zatthu would undoubtedly have to look to Aristarchus alone.

It was but a passing glance that he had directed to the house that was so soon to give him shelter. Even as he had caught sight of it the Lake of Galilee, which had heretofore been hidden by the city, revealed itself. This was not indeed his first glimpse of it. He had looked upon it from the cities of Tiberias and Magdala through which they had passed. All that morning he had been viewing it from the roadway which ran along its margin. But he had spent his life in Jerusalem with stony hills all around him; and this expanse of blue water was a fascinating sight. Blue the lake was this morning as it lay beneath a cloudless sky, its surface ruffled only by a faint and fitful breeze. “Here all the ships in the world might ride,” he thought as he looked to the distant and dimly outlined southern shore.

But his thoughts were interrupted, for something of more human interest came suddenly within his vision. Even while gazing on the lake’s peaceful bosom and noting the many sails it bore, he became aware that two white-robed figures were

issuing from the house and coming toward the caravan. They came with a hurried and yet measured step. They were women, yet they were not veiled.

No, they were not veiled; yet as they drew near they were seen to be women of rare beauty. Realizing who they must be Zatthu looked fixedly at them for a moment, turned away his gaze, and then found his eyes seeking them again. One of them, whose hair was slightly tinged with grey and who had a noble matronly air, was plainly the wife of Aristarchus. The other — at this very moment the other, who was now just opposite to him, turned her eyes and looked directly into his.

There are moments that memory treasures through mere caprice; there are others it clings to simply because it cannot let them go. They are as vivid as a lightning flash upon a midnight sky. And to Zatthu such a moment had come. He was not in love. Love is not the creation of an instant any more than an autumn harvest. Each needs a maturing sun. But the eyes into which he had looked were so dazzlingly beautiful that a new consciousness had come into his life. He had had no intimacy with any woman but his sister. Her he loved and admired for the sympathy and encouragement she gave him; but with other women he had naught to do. He did not seek them. He felt no impulse to seek them. His business was with men — solely and ceaselessly with men. Them he was to reach and rouse; with them he was to do great things that would be told through countless generations. But in an instant all was changed. One beautiful face had made him feel what men have felt ever since they were created, that woman is to be sought not shunned. This is her birthright. It belongs to her as surely as the river owes its waters to the sea. Zatthu had not known it before. He knew it now.

Not that the full realization came to him then and there. He had no time to think. The scene that followed was too tender a one to be closely regarded, but none there could be

unconscious of it. The older woman raised her hand commandingly. The caravan stopped. Mother and daughter hastened to the litter of Aristarchus. Not raising himself up, for the effort would have been too severe, the wounded man showed his joy by a smile that illumined his face.

"This pays for all the pain and weariness," he cried, extending his hands eagerly. "I am as glad to reach home as Odysseus was after his ten years' wandering."

His wife did not speak at once. Her feelings were plainly too deep for words. She clasped his hands in her own and looked at him searchingly as if to make sure that his true condition had not been hid from her. But as she looked, anxiety gave way to joy and satisfaction, and her face beamed with love and pride.

"This is no time for words," she said as she gently released his hands. "You must give Thisoa a greeting too, and then be borne into the house and rest, rest, rest."

But the daughter was not as chary of words as her mother. Zatthu, standing a little distance away, had been watching the two. Delicacy had at first made him turn his eyes away; but so open and so void of demonstration was the scene that to observe it did not really seem an intrusion upon privacy. The serving men stood around and noted what passed, almost as if they were expected to do so. So Zatthu found himself gazing, not indeed without deep respect and reverence, at this pleasing and affectionate family group.

It was upon the daughter that his eyes chiefly rested. Her mother was plainly a forceful character. She could act; she could endure. But quietude, self-restraint, repose spoke in all that she said and did. In the daughter there was an abounding vitality. Her every attitude showed it. Her presence seemed fairly to glow with life. Through filial reverence she had stood aside and let her mother be the first to approach the litter; yet all the time it seemed as if the daughter should have had the precedence. When her father greeted her, a

lively reply seemed to come from her as naturally as the arrow darts from the bow when the string is released. Aristarchus indeed had scarce uttered a word before she interrupted him and exclaimed as she shook a warning finger at him,

"I am Æsculapius. He was killed by lightning to be sure, but he has come to life again and you are under his orders. So lie still and don't say a word."

Aristarchus laughed good-humoredly. It was plain that he did not object to the dictatorial ways of this vivacious daughter. But his feeling as a host prevented him from giving immediate compliance.

"Æsculapius," he said, "has a much greater claim to obedience than Zeus who killed him; but I must perform the duties of hospitality before I put myself under his orders."

As he said this he motioned to Zatthu to approach and immediately continued.

"Before we pass within doors I must present to you both the generous friend but for whom I should not now be alive. This is he," he added as Zatthu slowly came and stood beside the litter. "This is the man who drew his sword for me when I had no claim upon him. He is no doubt surprised to see the women of my household run forth into the open without veils to greet me, accustomed as he is to the ways and manners of Jerusalem. But when is custom not to be set aside if not for a man who has had too intimate an acquaintance with the sword of a bandit? And this daughter of mine — her name is Thisoa and her mother is Xenodice — has always showed disdain for rules and customs that did not fall in with her own ideas. And now" — he looked at his wife and daughter as he said this — "will you both thank this brave man for his generous act and make him feel that he is welcome to our house."

"You are welcome indeed," said Xenodice stepping forward and standing directly in front of Zatthu. "Words

would fail me if I tried to express to you my gratitude. I shudder to think of the grief I should have suffered but for your timely service. From my heart I thank you.”

“And I, too, thank you,” said Thisoa, smiling graciously as she spoke and once more looking Zatthu in the eyes for an instant. It was only for an instant, but as Zatthu gazed into the violet depths of eyes by far the most beautiful he had ever seen, he was again stirred by the thought that woman was not created to be shunned or let alone.

The litter was lifted. All moved on; and out of the glaring sunlight Zatthu was ushered into the shaded and comfortable house of Aristarchus.

III

A servant in white linen conducted him to the room assigned to him. In a wondering mood he followed the man. Ordinarily observant, he did not now look scrutinizingly about him and he got only the vague impression of elegance and taste.

Once in his apartment he wished to be left to himself. But he let the servant remove the stains of travel from his feet and hands and help him attire himself in one of the fresh changes of apparel that had been generously provided. Grateful when the man left and closed the door behind him, he sat down to think. Bred and trained in the ways of a rigid sect, he found himself questioning whether his ideas needed readjustment. Those two women of noble dignity who had come out unveiled under the open sky and greeted him so graciously had set a wind playing on the stacked sheaves of his cherished conceptions. The stack had not indeed been thrown rudely down. It was only a little disturbed. Had it become necessary to pull it to pieces and build it all up from the bottom? Hardly so; but it needed a little reconstruction.

It was while he was still brooding that the servant, Nicon by name, appeared again and invited him to go to Aristarchus' own apartment. Surprised, yet gladly obeying the summons, he was taken to the bedside of his wounded host, whom he addressed on the instant he entered the room without waiting for him to speak.

"This attention to a guest is most generous, but it would please me better if you obeyed the injunctions your wife and daughter gave you at your very door. I beg you to rest and not concern yourself about me."

"A sick man is always refractory and I am no exception to the rule. Rest I shall, but not till the rites of hospitality have been duly shown. I see you are freshly clad; that is

well. Now you must eat and drink with me. Pray sit down."

Zatthu seated himself close to his host. He could not do otherwise. At a signal from Aristarchus Nikon brought to the bedside a table on which a slender repast had been prepared.

"Those figs," said Aristarchus, "were grown in our own garden and are entirely fresh. I am sure you will find them palatable. You may think the barley cakes do not look tempting, but if you will try one I am sure you will be pleased. They are mixed with honey and I have never known Grumio — I brought him with me from Athens — to fail in getting the proportions right. It is a meagre offering to a hungry man after a trying experience with the poor fare of Galilean inns; but I shall see that a more substantial repast is served you soon. I merely wish you to eat a morsel with me now and drain a cup of wine to establish the tie of friendship. You are to be what we Greeks call ξένος, the 'guest-friend' of the house. So first of all pray drink from the beaker which Nikon has filled for you. Your own health I shall drink in this greatly weakened mixture, as wine undiluted would not be good for my wound.

"Ah, I see that you hesitate, but you need not do so. This tie puts no obligation upon you whatever. You have done for me what I never can repay. I want you to be my 'guest-friend' merely that you may feel my house to be your home and my interest and service always to be at your command."

Hardly more than a youth, Zatthu had a settled gravity born both from native seriousness and from the dominance of his great purpose over his mind. His force of character made him a leader: for some time he had been taking the tone of a leader in his dealings with men. This Aristarchus felt, and, much older though he was, he spoke not without deference in so earnestly pressing his genial hospitality; and it was even with a shade of anxiety that he awaited his guest's reply.

The reply did not come; so the Greek continued,

"Perhaps I am expecting too much. You Hebrews are a proud people. You seem to hold yourselves above all other races, and I believe your Mosaic Law makes you averse to eating and drinking with those whom you count aliens and to partaking of foods they daily use."

"Moses did bind my people to many usages and customs," Zatthu said at last, "which prevent us from entering freely into relations of friendliness and hospitality with those who are not of our own blood. These rites and customs came, we think, from Jehovah Himself, that we might preserve our race strain pure and be his peculiar people from generation to generation. And so I must confess to you that my mind has been undergoing a conflict. When I accepted your invitation to come here, I did not think of all that it involved; and the Mosaic traditions came home to me forcibly when you so generously urged me to become your guest-friend by partaking of your bounty.

"But the conflict has passed. It has altogether passed. What I saw and heard as we neared your door has been as a light to me. Jehovah blesses a pure home. Surely, this home of yours is under his holy keeping. Surely He looked with favor on me when I helped to save you and He looks with favor on me now as I come beneath your roof for food and shelter. The Romans would find and slay me, yet you take me in. Truly, you are Jehovah's servant and you do me honor when you would fain make me your guest-friend. Gladly would I be that, but I feel that I ought not to be. I am a hunted man. All that I shall ever bring you will be trouble."

"Let it come. I shall welcome it. Did you not save my life?"

"Hardly your life; only your property. They would not have put you to death in cold blood."

"They were just about to give a death stroke to my com-

panions. Some of them at any rate you saved from destruction. So if the scruples occasioned by your race and creed have vanished, I pray you drink with me and eat of this simple fare."

Both drank and Zatthu ate, somewhat hastily, a fig and a bit of the barley cake. Then he rose and excused himself, for he knew the interview had brought more fatigue to his host than he had anticipated when he gave free play to his impulses of hospitality. But as Zatthu strode away he was halted by a request that gave him a shock of surprise and pleasure.

"Will you not," said Aristarchus, "allow my wife and daughter to receive you later after you have eaten and rested? They wish to give you a heartier and friendlier welcome than they could before you had passed under our roof."

Zatthu bowed gravely and said,

"Your consideration knows no bounds. It leaves nothing unthought of or unsaid."

"Nicon will wait on you then sometime before sundown."

Zatthu bowed once more and went to his own apartment.

IV

There he was soon served with a bounteous meal which convinced him that his host's praise of the cook Grumio was well warranted. But though he could but realize that the dishes were deliciously prepared, he did not eat with the zest of a hungry man. His mind was upon what the day had brought and what it was yet to bring.

The doughtiest enemies human beings have to face they coin with their own brains. Superstition, tradition, usage rout men who would not quail before an army with banners. And never was a sect or a class more dominated by usage and tradition than that to which Zatthu belonged. The Pharisees were slaves to the beliefs and practices which their party had long held sacred. They had indeed become formalists of the most uncompromising type; and though they had thus stamped themselves as ardent patriots they had at the same time grown to be fierce and intolerant bigots. They were patriots because they held that Hebrews of unmixed blood were alone acceptable to Jehovah and would be raised by Him above all the nations of the world. They were bigots because they thought by sacredly keeping their time-honored observances they made themselves immeasurably superior to the common herd of men. Of the highest importance therefore was it to bow absolutely to tradition and to obey every jot and tittle of the law. The Pharisee who violated ancient rite and custom made himself unclean.

Zatthu could not but be strongly swayed by the beliefs and traditions of his sect. Happily he was too large-minded to make a fetich of them. It was not without a shock that he had seen Aristarchus' wife and daughter come forth to greet him unveiled; yet he soon felt that these women were too dignified and noble to be regarded with anything but deep respect. In all matters of behavior and decorum they must

be a law unto themselves. Hence it was his very profound recognition of their worth and of the beautiful character they gave to this home he was enjoying, that made him willing to become Aristarchus' guest-friend.

Yet how strange it was and what did it mean? Jehovah was guiding his every step. Of that he felt sure. Without that confidence how could he go on with his mighty task of setting his country free? Had not Jehovah delivered him from prison when everything seemed hopeless? And surely it was under the leading of this same Jehovah that he found his way directly from Cæsarea to the spot where the generous-minded Greek was fighting for his property and his life.

Yes, none but the mighty Jehovah had brought him into this friendly home, and who could say what end He had had in doing so? Perhaps these kindly Greeks would turn to him for light, spiritual light. Perhaps they would bow to the God of Abraham and Moses. Perhaps they would lend their influence to the cause so near to his heart. Those two women of noble and commanding presence showed a ready interest in his great ambition. And what a glorious part had been played by the women of his nation in the past! There were Miriam and Deborah, and Manoah's wife and Esther; yes, and the dread deed of Jael, the wife of Heber the Kenite, was not to be forgotten.

True, that stately girl with the lustrous eyes could never be a Deborah. That was not thinkable. She was not of his people; such as she could never lead and inspire them. Yet from her and her mother and from Aristarchus too he might get sympathy and counsel. Who could say what means Jehovah would use to confound His enemies? Did He not raise up Cyrus to capture Babylon and release the Hebrew exiles from their long captivity? Aristarchus was a trader, but he was not sordid. He might be led by Jehovah to give of his labor and his substance to the holy Cause.

The Cause! On that did Zatthu now brood long and

fondly. But for the faith that was in him its prospects were not bright. He was an escaped prisoner. The Romans were everywhere looking for him. He had to abandon Judæa and plant sedition in Galilee — in Galilee where were Syrians and Arabs and Phœnicians and other aliens living side by side with his own countrymen. What a mixed host would be formed out of these men of varying race and varying traditions? Could it lay low the serried Roman legion? Yes, he was sure it could. Had he not just now been seeing Jehovah's hand in the great deliverance that had been wrought for him at Cæsarea? It could not fail when the freedom of the chosen people was at stake.

To confirm his faith he dwelt upon the past. His spirit waxed strong within him as he thought of all that the God of his fathers had done for the generations of long ago. Those wondrous deeds now almost seemed to be enacted before his very eyes. He saw the Red Sea engulf the host of Pharaoh. He saw the brazen serpent lifted up in the wilderness and the water gushing out of the smitten rock. He saw the priests pass dryshod over the bed of Jordan. He saw the walls of Jericho fall, the Philistines plunge to destruction when Samson pulled away the pillars of their temple.

Absorbed in thinking of these wondrous manifestations of Jehovah's power, he was oblivious of the passage of the hours. His soul was transported, a feeling of exaltation possessed him. The things that would be done were greater far than the things accomplished of old. And it was through him that they would be wrought. He was humbled and yet exalted at the thought of it. The day might come when he would interpret the will of Jehovah. A wondrous thought, that; yet he must never let it lead him astray. If he was to be a leader like Joshua or a messenger like Elisha, he would always remember that without Jehovah's will not a single Roman could be thrust down into the dust.

It was while his soul was thrilled with thoughts like these

that he was summoned to go to the wife and daughter of his host. Mechanically he rose and followed the servant. His mind was still on the things he was to do. The zeal for performing them burned so strongly in him that it was with a kindling eye and an exultant tread that he walked into the room where the two women were awaiting him. He was more like a prophet ready to disclose a vision than a fugitive from justice who might on the morrow be captured and put to death.

Xenodice's greeting was stately yet most cordial. Neither she nor Thisoa was now attired in spotless white as in the morning. Xenodice had on a grey robe which toned with the greyish color of her hair and which fell in graceful folds from her matronly figure. But matronly though she was, she carried herself superbly and her easy bearing as she advanced a few steps to meet Zatthu and show him peculiar graciousness might have been a model for Esther when she wanted to win the favor of Ahasuerus. Her eyes were dark and large; her features were finely moulded; and so noble was her presence that no one who was sensitive to the charm of a perfectly poised womanhood could have been tempted to turn from her at once to behold the more brilliant beauty of her daughter.

Not so was Zatthu tempted, even though he was immediately conscious of Thisoa's captivating personality. Hers was indeed a challenging and arresting beauty. Tall as Zatthu himself, and slender in figure, she walked with so elastic a step that her motion seemed like joyously dancing waves. Her mother's features were of the purely Grecian type. Her own were shaped by nature when, in one of her defiant moods, she banishes rule and law and yet secures a surpassing loveliness. Perfect regularity they had not. But they were delicately moulded, and the mouth, whose natural curves were almost those of a smile, together with the sparkling eyes made the whole countenance radiant. And this beaming brightness, which made her presence felt like a burst of mellow sunshine,

was enhanced by the masses of golden hair that were gathered in shining coils above her low broad forehead. In her robe of soft purple she was a figure of rich and entrancing beauty.

"Again let me thank you for the service you have done us," said Xenodice as she stepped graciously forward. "And let me, too, welcome you to our home."

The full grey eyes looked smilingly into his. With just enough of a smile to soften his austere gravity, he returned the glance, bowed low and said,

"You magnify the service. Your welcome honors me greatly."

Xenodice motioned him to a chair. All sat and she continued,

"Will you not sometime bring your two friends here? I should like to tell them too that I never can forget what we owe to them."

"I will gladly bring them if they will come."

"Why should they be unwilling? Do not men always like to be praised when they have done a brave and generous deed?"

"Not always. These friends of mine think of one thing and live but for one thing — to free Judæa."

"But you have honored us by coming here, and my husband tells me that for this same end you, too, have labored, been put in prison and barely escaped death."

"They follow, I lead. The eagle must fly where the sparrow does not go."

"And what does the eagle see that is hidden from the sparrow?" inquired Thisoa. Contrary to her wont she had been up to this time silent, for Zatthu had seemed to cast a spell upon her from the moment he had entered the room. His bearing had not been without majesty. His rapt expression, his measured tread and his deep gravity had given to his presence a distinction which was emphasized when he spoke. His rich sonorous voice was all the more impressive because

of the entire calmness of his tones. Their very tranquillity suggested a reserve of power. And this quiet forcefulness was deeply felt by Thisoa. So dominated was she by it that her utterance, half-playful though it was, was made in a spirit of deep seriousness. The man interested her. She was eager to know his mind.

Zatthu turned his eyes to her as she spoke. Splendid as her beauty was, it had roused no deeper feeling in him than had been awakened when he saw her first. In the hours that had just passed he had consecrated himself newly to his purpose. It now burned within him like a flame. It made him not easily sensitive to other emotions. And yet these words of the beautiful Greek almost startled him. He caught the note of sobriety in the rallying question. Was there here a spirit intense, soaring, responsive to high ambitions, even like his own? With unchanged gravity, but with a tinge of curiosity in his look, he answered,

"Things not lightly to be told. Coming earthquakes; mountains falling; floods covering the earth."

"Like your people, you talk in figures. I can guess at your meaning, but I am not sure of it. Will you not tell it to us plainly?"

"Tell me first your guess."

"You mean war against the Romans and their downfall."

"Exactly that. I need add nothing."

"It will really be?"

"I am sure of it."

"And sure of the end?"

"Absolutely sure."

"What makes you sure?"

"My faith in the God of my people."

"The God whom you call Jehovah?"

"Even so."

"What will He do?"

"Fight with us; destroy our enemies."

“What makes you think He will?”

“He did it of old. He will do it again.”

“Has He always done this for your people?”

“Not always; not for many hundred years.”

“What made Him stop and why should He begin again now?”

“My people sinned continually and worshipped false gods. Now they worship Him alone.”

“You seem very sure. I hope your trust will not prove your undoing.”

“It will not do that. Without it we should fail; with it we shall overwhelm our enemies. But I have lingered long. I must not strain my welcome, for which I thank you both from the depths of my heart.”

And before any protest could be made Zatthu rose, bowed profoundly, turned abruptly and walked out of the room.

So quick and decided was his action that quiet acceptance of it seemed the only possible thing. So Thisoa and her mother watched him depart without speaking. After he had disappeared Thisoa sat for quite a while, in silence. Then she said to her mother,

“That, mother, is a man. If he does not succeed he will fail as gloriously as Leonidas and his brave Spartans did when they fell at Thermopylæ.”

V

The following morning Zatthu began to look about him in a spirit of curiosity and to get more definite impressions of the character of the house and its furnishings. Until now he had been too absorbed by his ambitious projects to take a deep interest in his surroundings.

The house was a very spacious one and artfully constructed to get the currents of air that blew across the lake from the mountains around. Its rooms were large and high. Their arrangement was rather that of a Roman than a Greek mansion, and yet the Roman manner of building had not been closely followed; for in the large atrium near the entrance, as well as in the stately peristyle in the rear of the mansion, was a fountain whose constantly playing waters gave forth a cooling sound. The seats in the atrium were plainly designed for comfort and for daily living. On either side of it were ample chambers for the use of guests, and it was in one of these that Zatthu was lodged. A passage, closed only by draperies, led to the peristyle, the middle space in which was surrounded by columns and open to the sky. Artistically arranged about the columns were abundant flowers and shrubs in pots or boxes filled with earth. It was on either side of the peristyle that the rooms especially devoted to the uses of the family were built. Back of these was the kitchen; beyond was a carefully cultivated garden.

So different was this whole interior from that to which he had been accustomed in Jewish houses that Zatthu noted it all with interest so far as he could do so without intruding upon privacy. But the thing that impressed him most was the absence of bronze and marble statues. Not one was to be seen. The furnishings were rich and even sumptuous. The draperies, the chairs and other furniture of wood and bronze, the vases, the tessellated floors all gave evidence that taste

had been shown and expense not spared in giving the house beauty and completeness. But Aristarchus had been mindful that he lived among a people to whom graven images were an offence. So, under his roof there was to be found no likeness of anything in heaven above, or on the earth beneath, or in the waters under the earth.

It was while he was examining a massive and beautifully carved seat of olive wood that he was called by Nicon to the bedside of Aristarchus. The Greek was in a cheerful mood. He had slept well. He felt the responsibility of a generous-minded host. He was anxious that his guest should be in no doubt that he was heartily welcome.

"You see me so well this morning," he exclaimed, "that I shall soon give Æsculapius his discharge. And how is it with you, my friend? Did this air from the Lake of Galilee give you refreshing slumber?"

"I could not fail to sleep soundly in a home where comfort is showered upon a guest like the rains brought by the western winds."

"I rejoice to hear it. And will you not rest here this morning after your long and weary journeying and this afternoon tell my wife, my daughter, and myself that wonderful tale of your escape from prison? You know you gave me only the most meagre account of it. I want to hear it in full — not a single thing left out."

"I will willingly tell the story, but rest I must not. This morning I must seek my friends and find what they have learned. They have not been idle, you may be sure."

"Will you not bring them here? My wife and daughter would be glad to see them and thank them for so generously helping a stranger."

"It is the shout of battle, not honeyed words, that they long for."

"Do your countrymen not love praise?"

"Does the hunter court the cooling shade when he finds the leopard's tracks?"

"Always the tyranny of Rome. You and your followers think of nothing else. Do you all dream of it at night?"

"I do, myself, sometimes."

"And do you see the rod you bow to broken in pieces?"

"Rather do I see a monster of clay shattered into fragments and trampled into dust."

"I should be glad to see your dream come true were it not that fire and sword would devastate the land if this should be. Well, do not forget that your friends will be warmly welcomed here if they choose to come. And do not linger too long with them. Two or three hours before sundown we shall expect to hear your story."

Though Aristarchus had not been encouraged to expect a visit from Kelita and Shobek, the visit was very shortly made. Going from the room of his host to his own apartment, Zatthu found his two followers in the atrium whither they had just been ushered. Since they had parted from him they had picked up news which they thought he ought to know. Not being sure that he would seek them immediately, they had come without delay to him. Finding they had things, important at least in their own eyes, to communicate, he took them to his room where they could talk in freedom.

"And what have you discovered?" Zatthu began.

"We have discovered," answered Kelita, "that Rome is on your track."

"Did you suppose I doubted it?"

"But," said Shobek, "they know here in Capernaum all about your escape from prison. They are looking for you here. Wherever there are Roman troops they are watching for you."

"They may watch. They will not find me. No one here knows me."

"But they may bring spies from Jerusalem," added Kelita.

"I do not think it. Is Rome terrified that she should so fear me? And as she does not know where I am, she would have to scatter her spies all over Galilee. It is not enough that they should know about me. Why, they would have to arrest half the men in Capernaum if they were going to act upon mere hearsay rumors of my doings."

"But they will note that you are a stranger here," said Shobek.

"That is hardly possible. There are too many people in the city for a newcomer to be so easily detected. However, I will go to my host and present the case. If he thinks there is anything in these fears of yours, I will at once find shelter somewhere else. I must not imperil him. Wait for me here. He will want me to bring you to him when he finds you are here."

Sending Nikon on to request a second interview, Zatthu was immediately summoned to the room of his host. Presenting to Aristarchus the fears of Kelita and Shobek, he was gratified to find them treated with scant consideration. Indeed, Aristarchus laughed at them and demanded that the two apprehensive Hebrews should be brought at once into his presence.

"You will never make warriors," he exclaimed when they appeared, "if you are so easily alarmed. What can a general do if his followers tell him to hide in a cave for fear of being captured?"

Shobek laughed good-naturedly. Kelita seemed a little crestfallen.

"We have but one general," he said, "and all is lost if anything happens to him. I got him out of prison once, but I might not be able to do it again."

"Yes, you did get him out of prison, and a famous feat it was. I do not blame you for not wishing to repeat it. But our friend Zatthu is perfectly secure. No one in Capernaum knows him, I am sure, and as for arresting him because he is

a stranger here and might be the man who caused such a terrible commotion at Cæsarea — why, that is absurd. Make your minds easy; and now that you are here, I want my wife and daughter to see you both. It is not every day that they can look upon men who have saved my life. They want to thank you for doing it. I know you are modest, but you must let them see you. I have sent for them. Ah, here they are.”

Xenodice and Thisoa entered the room at this moment, and greeted the two doughty followers of Zatthu with extreme graciousness, but with fine tact and understanding. Enough was said to show sincerely felt gratitude; not enough to give a tone of flattery to the words of appreciation.

The words did not have the same effect upon the two. Shobek, in spite of his modesty, was pleased, but too embarrassed to say anything in reply. He blushed and bowed awkwardly, but, opening his mouth to speak, found speech not forthcoming and so closed it without uttering a word. Upon the hunchback, Thisoa seemed to cast a spell from the moment she entered the room. He gazed at her in open-eyed wonder, and when she spoke to him he looked up at her adoringly as if she were a visitant from a higher world than his own. When she and her mother withdrew, which they did as soon as they had said what their feelings prompted, he seemed to be in a revery. Hardly collecting himself to say a word of farewell to Aristarchus he followed Zatthu who very quickly brought the interview at Aristarchus’ bedside to an end. Never had the lonely man, made shy by his deformity, been under a woman’s refining and restraining influence. Could the beautiful Greek have talked much and often with him, she might have softened those fierce and savage instincts which made him delight in killing a Roman by fair means or by foul. But he never saw her again and to the end he remained Rome’s deadly and vindictive enemy.

VI

Their apprehensions having been quieted, Kelita and Shobek pressed Zatthu to accompany them to their abiding place. This he did and walked with them to the central portion of the city, where Zichri, the shawl dealer lived. So much had he heard about Zatthu from his cousin Kelita that he greeted him most heartily, and yet not without caution and reserve. The prudent trader was a patriot. Still, he was averse to seeing hoardings scattered, homes ruined and blood flowing in streams unless the sacrifice was not to be a vain one.

Zatthu talked with him long enough to win his confidence. Then with Kelita and Shobek he sauntered for a long while about the city. It was all new to him. Even though the presence of a Roman garrison made it impossible for him to linger long and labor there, he yet wished to study the people and the place. He took in from a safe distance the solidly built quarters of the soldiers. He passed by the synagogue of black basalt, a stone much quarried in Galilee. He noted the faces of the people he met upon the streets and wondered at the number of Syrians, Arabs, and Phœnicians, and other aliens whom he saw mixed with his own countrymen. Mildness and goodhumor showed upon most of the countenances. These were not men smarting under wrong and eager to avenge it. Still, rebellion had broken out more than once in Galilee. He was sure the same spirit could be roused again.

After a time Kelita conducted him to the humble abode of a man who lived at the western end of the city. The man was very old. He knew Galilee, so Kelita had learned from Zichri, better than any one in Capernaum. Many, many years had he travelled among its villages as a vender of small wares. Now, white-bearded and dim-sighted, he had ceased to toil and was living on his memories of the past. Eagerly he peered into Zatthu's face when confronted with him, and it

was some moments before his scrutiny ended. Then he shook his head and muttered,

“A leader! A leader! Elisha or Isaiah might have looked as you do — but I do not know, I do not know.”

For a long time Zatthu talked with him. Information about thoroughfares, byways, mountain passes, and villages small and great he got from him. At last, bidding him good-bye and promising to come again, he wended his way back to the house of Aristarchus. It was now the late afternoon. He would wait another day before mingling with the elders of the synagogue or with other Jews of weight and substance in the city. The promise he had given Aristarchus to tell of his escape from prison must be kept.

It was into a room devoted to the uses of Xenodice and her daughter that he was in due time ushered. The apartment was a spacious one in the rear of the house and was approached through the peristyle. It was comfortably, not luxuriously, furnished. Evidences of taste and refinement were everywhere to be seen. The tints of the rugs were soft and agreeable. On the walls were hangings daintily embroidered by Thisoa and her mother. Chairs of the hard orange-brown shittim wood, that were at once comfortable and artistically designed and carved, gave the apartment a homelike appearance. On a table of the same material stood a vase filled with flowers that had been gathered from the garden just outside. This garden was not the large one in the rear of the mansion, but a smaller enclosure in which the two women of the household could have entire seclusion. It was surrounded by a high wall and could be entered from the apartment by a connecting door. But it was a cabinet upon the wall that more than anything else caught Zatthu's eye. Half open, it showed a number of wooden cylinders such as manuscripts were kept in, by the Romans especially, in ancient times. This was truly a cultivated household. The

mind was nurtured and trained, while the eye was taught to delight in what was beautiful.

Had Zatthu looked forward to this hour when he would again gaze into the violet eyes of the daughter of his host? Undoubtedly he had; but his desire to see her had not been a restless one. Sentiment had not been roused in him. Still was his mind too full of his one great purpose to have room for another passion. Yet he had not forgotten Thisoa's quick strong grasp of his loftiest designs as he had unfolded them in the previous interview. Here was one who felt the appeal of what was heroic and great. To see this fervent spirit show its enthusiasms would be a satisfaction. And certainly the satisfaction was not lessened by the beauty of the face that would radiate sympathy.

Hearty was the greeting Zatthu received as he entered the room. Aristarchus had been brought in on his couch. The moment he got sight of Zatthu he exclaimed,

"Ah, here you come with that stately step, as if you had scattered your enemies, and were ready to receive congratulations. Really, I wonder that Pilate did not ask you to take his seat instead of putting you in prison. But you are right welcome, to my wife and daughter here as well as to myself."

Xenodice and Thisoa smiled and made it plain that this kindly feeling was shared by them also, Xenodice adding her own brief words of greeting. Zatthu's acknowledgment was characteristically brief. Fluent as he was in speech, the language of politeness never flowed readily from his lips. Its suave exaggerations often seemed to him painfully insincere.

"You are worthy hosts," he said as he bowed low, and that faint smile, which to those who knew his habitual gravity was like a sunbeam chasing over dark waters, played over his face.

"If we were worthy of our guest," answered Aristarchus, "we should inquire whether you found your friends comfortably lodged — for that you went home with them I have no doubt — and whether this Galilean city of ours gives

promise that it will aid your great enterprise. But we are too eager to hear your story to be polite. Pray tell it to us then without delay. Our interest in your welfare and your prospects we shall show later."

"Yes, this will be so much better than a book," said Thisoa. "It will make the *Iliad* seem tame."

"Yet it is a bloody tale I have to tell. Will it really give you pleasure to hear how brave men were slain?"

"Yes, indeed! The same pleasure that it gives me to read how the Spartans fell fighting at Thermopylæ. If men have the courage to do such things, women should have the heart to hear of them."

Zatthu looked searchingly a moment at the speaker as she said this. A girl who could so readily give a reason for her feelings had not before crossed his path. Were there Jewish maidens like this? Perhaps. He had seen none.

"Bravery, I must admit," he answered, "is a stirring theme. It thrills me to read how our great king David when he was but a stripling killed the giant Goliath with a sling. And it is an exciting story I have to tell. What my two friends did ought to be sung by a poet like your Homer. I fear my own narrative will disappoint you."

But the narration was too vivid to cause disappointment. Zatthu's loyalty to his two rescuers made him give color to his words. So eager was he to do justice to their valor and resourcefulness that he described their actions with warmth of feeling and vigorous phrase.

"A noble adventure, nobly told!" cried Aristarchus when he had finished. "The exploit was indeed worthy of a Homer's powers, but one would not really wish for a more thrilling account than you have given."

"What do you suppose the Romans thought," asked Thisoa "when they examined the bodies and saw how battered and bruised some of them were?"

Zatthu darted another inquisitive glance at her before he

answered. She had manifested the liveliest interest in his story as it progressed. Now that it was over, instead of showing enthusiasm she asked a question that proved she had given attention to the details as they were presented. Here, it occurred to him, was a mind that would be a useful ally in the planning of large things. But could he, who would shake the yoke of bondage off of his nation, find an ally in a girl of alien race and false beliefs? No, no! It was preposterous to think it.

"I have wondered over that myself," he answered. "No doubt they were puzzled. The truth they could not have guessed, for surely no such fight was ever fought before."

"And now that your story is told," said Xenodice, "let me thank you for telling it. As my husband has said, it needed no better narrator than yourself. Never have I listened to anything so thrilling. But it is time for us to ask about your plans and prospects, if we may. You told us something of them when we saw you first; will you not tell us more?"

"Do you really wish to know?"

"We do indeed."

"That seems to me strange."

"Why so?"

"Because you are not of my race and worship."

"What of that? Is not a struggle for freedom always a thing of the deepest interest?"

"Yes, to a noble mind it is. But you are Greeks. You do not feel the tyranny we Hebrews writhe beneath. I should expect you to call it an act of folly instead of a struggle for freedom."

"It would be noble and heroic still," was Xenodice's quiet answer.

"And though we do not bow to your Jehovah, we do not worship the Greek or the Roman deities," said Thisoa. "They are too much like ourselves."

"You have learned what it took my own people hundreds

of years and bitter suffering to learn. Hardly had they been delivered from Egypt by great wonders before they made and worshipped a golden calf. Under many of our kings they went astray and bowed down to images of Baal. They were sorely punished and they have learned at last to worship Jehovah who made heaven and earth."

"How do you know He made heaven and earth?"

"He has told us that He did."

"When did He tell you?"

"Long ago. In our sacred books."

"He did not come Himself and tell you?"

"He showed Himself to Moses and talked with him face to face."

"To no one else?"

"Not so fully. But by angels whom He sent, by signs and wonders, by answering the prayers of our holy men and prophets, He revealed Himself again and again through many hundred years."

"I wish I could see Him. I should like to worship the one who made the earth and the sun and the moon and the stars. Our Greek Zeus never did that — no never in the world. He had to be created himself."

"And so he couldn't create, you think?" Zatthu inquired. He was finding it deeply interesting to probe the mind of this girl who had thoughts and problems of her own.

"No," she answered, "not the sun and the moon and the earth. How could he? I could shape all sorts of things out of clay, but I should have to have the clay to begin with."

"Does your god Jehovah," inquired Xenodice, "tell what becomes of us after death? I had a son three years older than my daughter here. He died when he was but ten, and I have grieved for him ever since. It would be a great joy to know that I was to meet him again."

"Jehovah has told us little about what is in store for us after our life here is ended. But our holy men have known

that the grave takes only the body, not that within the body which never dies. And when King David lost his dearly beloved son, he said, 'I shall go to him, but he will not return to me.' "

"I, too," said Aristarchus, "should like to know about all these things; but we asked our friend to come here that he might tell us a story, not that we might put ourselves at school. I hope that if he feels willing he will tell us what signs of encouragement he sees here in Capernaum. But let us not trouble him with further questions about these things that are as deep as the sea and as high as heaven."

So Zatthu told briefly about his experiences during the earlier part of the day. So kindly was the interest that was shown in him and his project that he felt it would be ungracious to wrap his doings in secrecy. But there was so little to tell that he made his account a brief one and excused himself as soon as it was ended. He felt that it was quite time to leave Aristarchus to rest.

VII

"I have tasted your salt. I have, though not without hesitation, let the tie be established between us which you so generously wished to form. I have told the story of the prison adventure in the presence of your wife and daughter. And now I must take my leave and be about my business."

"Where are you going?"

"To the house of some Pharisee. Kelita's cousin named several yesterday who would gladly give me shelter."

"But why leave here?"

"Because I ought to be with my own people."

Such was the conversation that began when Zatthu on the following morning was taken to the room of Aristarchus. But the Greek stoutly resisted his guest's decision. Zatthu's strong personality was felt through the house. His presence seemed the dominating one in it. In the brief time that he had been there he had made husband, wife, and daughter all feel that his interests were theirs, his relation to them a living and vital one. There would be a painful void when he was gone. So it was with strong feeling that Aristarchus said in reply to Zatthu's wish to be with those of his own race:

"Be with your own people every day. Go about among them. Consort with them. Consult and plan with them. But all the while make my house your home. Should the rumor by any possibility get round that Zatthu, the escaped prisoner, was hiding in Capernaum, you would be safest under this roof. All the Jewish houses would be searched. They would not think of looking for you here."

"But you would be aiding and abetting treason. I am seeking to make my people revolt. You give me shelter. Rome would count you, too, a rebel should all this be known."

"That is my concern. I do not fear the consequences."

"They may be grave."

"No. Marcus the centurion here would protect me. He is my friend. He would not think I had done wrong in giving hospitality to the man to whom I owed so much. Besides, we want to hear more of your traditions and your faith. Zeus and Apollo are dead. They never really lived. But we Greeks, like all peoples, would fain be worshippers. Stay and tell us what to believe."

Like all his race Zatthu had been brought up in the belief that Jehovah was the God of his own people and none but Hebrews could be under his peculiar care. And yet this appeal impressed him deeply. Perhaps he was chosen by Jehovah to lead this just and upright household to the truth. So after a moment's thought he answered,

"I cannot say 'No' to such a request. I will remain with you until the Sabbath has passed by. That is two days hence. Your hospitality is most generous."

"To you how could it be other than free and open? And now that you have yielded, though but partially, to one wish, I am going to press another. My friend Marcus, the centurion of whom I spoke, is coming here this morning. I want you to know him."

"That could not be. It would get you into trouble and ruin me and all my hopes."

"Oh, you are not to meet him. That of course would not do at all. I want you to go into that room adjoining where you can hear all we say without being seen."

"Your proposal is tempting. I should like to know the man's character and mind. It might some time be of use to me. But would it be quite fair to do this?"

"Not if he were to give away secrets. But we shall talk of nothing he would be unwilling for you to hear about if he knew you were at hand. So you would be no spy. You would simply be getting acquainted with a peculiarly frank and honorable mind."

“Well, I will do as you wish. How soon do you expect him?”

“At any moment. He sent me word that he had heard of my mishap and was coming to see me. Ah, there is Nikon coming now. I hear his tread. Perhaps Marcus has arrived and is wishing to know if I am ready to receive him.”

It was as Aristarchus had supposed. Nikon entered and said the centurion was waiting in the atrium. He was bidden to usher him in and as the servant went out, Aristarchus said hurriedly to Zatthu,

“Remember that my servants who helped drive off the robbers were all strictly charged not to tell of the assistance we had from you and your friends. They are trusty and have certainly obeyed their instructions. No story of the help you gave has got about. So be at ease, Marcus has not come here to make any discomfoting inquiries.”

Zatthu nodded by way of reply and stepped into the adjoining room. He found it to be a dressing or retiring room such as becomes more of a necessity than a luxury in a large and well furnished house. He seated himself and soon found himself listening to a conversation of absorbing interest.

VIII

In a moment or two a heavy tread heralded the approach of the Roman centurion. He received the heartiest welcome from Aristarchus and equally cordial was his own greeting to his wounded friend.

"Delighted I am," Zatthu heard him say in a deep, musical voice, "to find you so much like yourself. I was grieved, indeed, when I heard of your mishap. Was the wound deep?"

"It wasn't one of those savage thrusts your Roman broadswords give. I shall soon be well of it. And it was my own fault. I am ashamed when I think how I let that fellow get by my guard."

"Tell me all about it. Just where did it happen and how much of a fight did you really have?"

"Not much of a one. We beat the fellows off easily. They came at us while we were passing a spur of the Carmel range. Carmel is well wooded, you know. I suppose they have their nest somewhere on its slopes."

"It is a nest that ought to be cleaned out. How many of the ruffians were there?"

"I didn't count them. I believe they outnumbered us by one or two and we were seven. But you see we were better armed, and so we routed them without any trouble though the fellow I crossed swords with did manage to make his weapon bite."

The next fragment of conversation Zatthu followed imperfectly. He was amused at the plausible falsehoods by which his own part in the conflict was hidden; he was also concerned by them. That Aristarchus should on his account be forced to deceive his friend troubled him. He was therefore glad to hear the subject dismissed by Marcus' declaration that Mount Carmel must be searched and the lair of the marauding band discovered. "I hope you will find them,"

said Aristarchus. "Otherwise I shall feel like taking a stronger guard on my next trading expedition. They might grow in numbers, you know. But tell me the news. Shut up as I am, I haven't got in touch with things here. First of all, how are Naarah and the children? Does Miriam grow to look more like her mother; and that black-eyed little rascal of a Cornelius — has he cut all his teeth yet?"

"We are all of us well. Miriam continues to look strikingly like her mother, though I am not able to believe that she will ever be as beautiful as my Naarah. As for little Cornelius, whom I named after my father you know, if I were to judge by the troubled hours I have spent with him, he has a great many more teeth than any child needs. Black though his eyes are, like his mother's, he has a Roman face and he is going to be a real Roman man. But no more about my family. I have my faults, but I am not going to be one of those parents that bore their friends by talking about their children."

"Agreed, provided you tell me one thing more. Is Naarah's grandfather well, and where is he now?"

"He is well, though he has aged rapidly ever since he came back from Rome to spend his last years in his own land. He is living now with his nephew Phinehas in Nazareth. He never would do more than visit with Naarah and me. He said young married people should have their home to themselves."

"A fine old man he is. I should like to see him again. Well, as you don't want to talk about your family, tell me of the city. What has been happening in and about Capernaum?"

"What has been happening? That is not an easy question to answer. Many things have been happening. Shamma the Sadducee has sold a lame donkey to Hilkiah, one of the rulers of the synagogue, you may remember, for twice its value, and has thereby brought much dissension into the synagogue. Some side with Hilkiah and say he was shame-

fully cheated; some with Shammua, claiming that Hilkiah was served exactly right for buying with his eyes shut. My sympathies are all with the donkey, for the poor beast has to carry loads that are much too heavy for him. And then old Kadmiel who was ninety-nine years old last Adar and whose one desire is to be a hundred, nearly died in a fit of choking, but . . .”

“Stay, stay Marcus. I don’t want to know who has sneezed or how many windy days there have been. It is real news I am after. Ah, I know your mind so well. When you put me off with these trifles, you have something of consequence to tell, something that deeply interests you. What is it?”

There had been a twinkle in Marcus’ eye when he volubly related these trivial happenings. Now his face became grave as he said,

“Yes, there is a thing that is now interesting me above all others. It is the appearance of the man Jesus of Nazareth who was heralded by John the Baptist. You may have heard that John the Baptist said a greater than he was to come after him. I think he has come.”

IX

These words of Marcus startled Zatthu so that he almost betrayed his presence. John the Baptist! So that strange fanatic was misleading people still! He himself with other Pharisees had gone out from Jerusalem to hear him when he preached in Judæa and baptized many in the Jordan. But his words were wild and malevolent. The men of light and leading like himself he had called a "generation of vipers"; the rough ignorant people he had greeted as brethren. Such a man was a menace to any true movement for national deliverance. And this man Jesus could be no true leader if his way had been prepared by John. Eagerly Zatthu waited for what was to follow.

"I remember John the Baptist," said Aristarchus, "though I saw him only once and I did not know he called himself the herald of another. Is he preaching still?"

"No, he has been put in prison by the tetrarch, Herod. That evil-living prince, as you know, married Herodias, his brother Philip's wife. For this act of licentiousness John rebuked him and roused Herod's wrath, as the Hebrew prophets roused it of old when they told a king to his face of his evil deeds."

"The Herod line has not been noted for clean living. I am glad one of them has been called to account for his misdeeds. But this man Jesus you were speaking of—where have I heard of him before? His name is familiar."

"Perhaps when he was at Capernaum the first time a little while before the Passover. He was in the city for a few days then."

"No, I remember now. When I was on my way to Ptolemais and passed through Cana, they told me a strange story of a thing he did there at a marriage feast. They said he turned the jars of water into wine. But of course I counted

it an idle tale, invented by some one who had taken too much wine himself."

"I should be slow in setting down anything said to have been done by Jesus as an idle tale," answered Marcus gravely. "He is an extraordinary man."

"But you really do not believe he is working miracles like those the Jews claim their old-time worthies performed?"

"I cannot shut my eyes to the fact that he is doing exactly that."

"You astonish me. The man must have impressed you profoundly. Tell me about him. Tell me all you know."

Aristarchus' interest had been thoroughly roused. His question had been put to gratify his own curiosity. Zatthu he had for the moment quite forgotten and he did not realize how a second listener was eagerly waiting for Marcus' answer.

"You know," Marcus began, "how carefully I watch this portion of the country where I am posted. When this Jesus came here in the month of Adar, some three Sabbaths before the Passover, I saw him one day walking with his brothers in the street. I noted that they were strangers and I found out who they were and where they lodged. So struck was I by his face that several times I passed by the house where they were stopping in the hope of seeing him again. This happened, and this second time I became still more sure that I was looking at no ordinary man."

"What was there about him that made you feel so?"

"His whole expression, but especially his eyes, the tenderest I have ever seen; yes, even more beautifully tender than those of Naarah when she smiles upon her babe."

"But that would seem to denote a countenance lacking in strength."

"His did not. There was majesty in his look and bearing."

"Did you speak to him?"

"No. There was a dignity about him that discouraged it. I only stood and scrutinized him closely, and that he did not

resent. He gave me in return a look that was all friendliness; but friendly though it was, I felt that his eyes were seeing into my soul."

"Were his brothers like him?"

"No; they seemed of a rougher mould — just like hundreds of other decent Galilean men."

"That, you say, was last Adar. What has he been doing since?"

"So much was I interested in him that I have kept watch on his movements — an easy thing for me, you know, with the service I can command. Just before Passover he went to Jerusalem, and there he acted like one of the Jewish prophets of old. With a scourge he drove the money-changers and their animals out of the temple and upset their tables. This made feeling against him and he came back to Galilee through Samaria where he was hospitably received, and in the city of Sychar he stopped for two days, a thing that would not make the Pharisees of Jerusalem think any more favorably of him, for you know they look down on the Samaritans. Going on into Galilee, he naturally went first to his own city of Nazareth. But his own townsmen handled him rudely when he spoke in their synagogue and so he came to Capernaum.

"And is he still here?"

"Here or in the country round about. He seems to have made Capernaum his home."

"What does he do?"

"He preaches in the synagogues and talks to the people wherever they gather together. Nor does he stop with healing their minds; he heals their bodies too."

"Have you seen him do this?"

"Yes. The first Sabbath he was in Capernaum he spoke in the synagogue, and when a man with a devil cried out against him, he drove the devil out of him; and the same day at sunset they brought sick people to him, outside of the city, and he healed them all."

"You really saw this with your own eyes?"

"With my own eyes, Aristarchus. But I see you don't believe what I say, so I will tell you no more."

"No, no! Not so fast! I doubt, but I don't deny. I am trying to look at it as Socrates would have done. He did not set a thing down as impossible because it was unusual. But unusual you must admit such things to be."

"Altogether so. Yet what religion is there that does not claim to have wrought them? Not that of your country or of mine."

"True. But to claim is not to prove. Let us leave such questions, though. Socrates and Plato could not settle them. You and I shall not. I want to know more of this Jesus of Nazareth. You say his brothers were like the men we see every day. How about his father and mother? Do you know anything about them?"

"Very little. They were humble toilers, I believe. I am told that the father was a carpenter and Jesus worked with him at this trade."

"Hm. A carpenter's son. And what sort of friends does he make? Is it the common people only that flock to him?"

"His friends are of the people — fishermen, and even publicans. It is the people that follow him about and hang upon his words."

"Hm, hm, hm. Marcus, you are the queerest Roman patrician that ever walked the seven-hilled city. At Rome you made friends with gladiators and wine-bibbers and married a Jewess though your father warned you it would spoil your career. And here in this Hebrew country no sooner does a man turn up who draws the common herd about him and makes enemies of the priests and Pharisees and traders than you extol him and take him at his own rating. Next you'll be throwing your sword into the Lake of Galilee and running after him."

"You have lived much longer than I have, Aristarchus.

Haven't you found it unwise to prophesy what any man will do or not do?"

"Of course I was but jesting. But seriously, are you not afraid this man will lead the people astray and stir up a rebellion?"

"I cannot associate that face of innocence and gentleness with violence. No, he will not cause any uprising."

"But if he did? Should you suppress it?"

"Yes, unless I were a part of it."

"What do you mean? You could never be a traitor — you, Marcus, the son of the Prefect of Rome!"

"No, I could never be a traitor. I could never draw my sword against Rome. I could believe however that a power not of this world was arrayed against the mightiest power that is in this world."

"You talk in riddles."

"Do I? Let me tell you a thing that happened in my own home while you were away. Perhaps you will understand me better then. Yet I doubt if I ought to tell the story. I cannot make it mean much if I tell it briefly, and I have already talked too long, I fear."

"I am not tired. Give me your story and do not shorten it."

X

"You inquired after Naarah and the children. There is one in my household about whom you did not ask."

"Oh, your big ex-gladiator, Hacho. No, I never thought of inquiring after such a lusty fellow as him. Surely nothing has gone amiss with him."

"Yes, strange as it may seem. He was taken suddenly with a creeping palsy that seemed to paralyze one member after another. I call it creeping, but it crept so fast that we were very soon alarmed. Three days after it fastened itself upon him he had to take to his bed. Already his limbs were nearly useless. It seemed as if the disease would surely make its way to his lungs and heart and the life would end.

"Naarah and I were deeply distressed. If Hacho had been of the blood of either of us, I do not think we could have cared for him more. You know his character yourself — always faithful, always kind, always gentle, always brave. No man ever had a better servant.

"So grieved was Naarah that she stood with the tears in her eyes and begged me to do something.

"'What can I do?' I said. 'We have tried every physician in the city and they are all helpless.'

"'Go and find Jesus. Something tells me that he will cure him.'

"A wise thought that sprang from a woman's sympathy. Why it had not occurred to me to do this, I do not know. I suppose it was because our minds are fettered by experience: and experience does not teach us to look for a miracle when our bodies are ailing. But hope sprang up in me as soon as Naarah spoke of Jesus. On the instant I started out to find him.

"People that I met near my door told me he had been seen just outside of the city and that he had been working won-

derful cures there. Eagerly I made my way in the direction pointed out. The sun was shining brightly. So soft and sweet was the air that it seemed to give peace to the mind. All, I felt, would be well.

"Hurrying on I caught sight of Jesus and those with him just as I reached the edge of the city. As usual he was attended by a few of the curious as well as by those whom he has chosen to follow him. Joy was in my heart. I was about to quicken my step and make my plea for Hacho as soon as I was near enough to him, when I saw that which made me stand still. A man made his way toward Jesus. That he was a leper was plain, for every one shrank away from him. Boldly however he went forward because of the faith that was in him. He knelt at the feet of Jesus and I was not too far away to hear him cry out in a voice that filled me with pity, so earnest, so agonizing were its tones,

" 'Lord, if thou wilt, thou canst make me clean.'

"And through the still air, while a hush as of death was upon all those that stood around, I heard the clear, calm words of Jesus,

" 'I will; be thou clean.'

"He stretched out his hand. The healing came. It came in an instant, for the man rose at once and lifted his hands toward heaven to give thanks to God. But as if the thing he had done was nothing, Jesus started on again and came toward me with a calm majestic tread.

"I did not go to meet him. I stood still. For I was awed. I was overwhelmed with feelings I know not how to describe. Who was this Jesus and whence had he this strange power? Surely, from no one but Jehovah. The voice that created heaven and earth was speaking through this lofty man. I must obey it. Yes, I, raised to authority by Rome, must bow to an authority far mightier than that of Rome. So as Jesus drew near to me I felt myself to be but as a child.

"It was not till he was close to me that I spoke. Then I

looked into his eyes — ah! how tender and mild they were! — and cried,

“‘Lord, my servant lieth at home sick of the palsy, grievously tormented.’

“With a wonderful look of compassion, he answered at once,

“I will come and heal him.”

“And then it was that my sense of the man’s holiness grew overpowering, bewildering. I, a man who ordered others, was in the presence of one who was fit to rule the whole world by the power that was given him from above. And so I answered, scarce knowing what I said,

“‘I am not worthy that thou shouldest come under my roof; but speak the word only, and my servant shall be healed. For I am a man under authority, having soldiers under me; and I say to this man, Go, and he goeth; and to another, Come, and he cometh; and to my servant, Do this, and he doeth it.’

“A look that might be of wonderment came into his eyes as I said these words, and he turned to those about him and said,

“‘Verily I say unto you, I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel.’

“Then looking at me, he added, ‘Go thy way; and as thou hast believed, so be it done unto thee.’

“Then he went on his way, while I stood still as if a spell was upon me till he and his followers had all passed by. For some moments I stood watching them, the errand that had brought me there altogether forgotten. I could only think of that calm and holy presence, the wondrous compassion of the eyes that had looked into mine, the effortless assertion of a superhuman power.

“But soon they turned into a side street and were lost to view, and then I came to myself and thought of Hacho. Was he really healed? Surely he was. I could not doubt, for had

not Jesus said it should be done unto me even as I had believed? I should find him well — him, Hacho, whom I had left with the breath of life scarcely in him.

“So I started home and in my eagerness to see with my own eyes this miracle of healing that I knew had been accomplished, I broke into a run. I see you smile, but it was even so. I, Marcus, the centurion, with the weight of Rome’s dignity upon my shoulders, ran through the streets of Capernaum like a boy.

“And it had all happened exactly as I foresaw. Naarah was watching for me. As I drew near the house she stood in the doorway with the tears in her eyes; but this time they were tears of joy and her face was all sunshine. For there was Hacho standing beside her, as well and sound as when he used to stand in the arena at Rome. He bounded out into the street before I reached the house, and the tears were in his eyes too as he took my hand, and in spite of my holding it back he carried it to his lips.

“‘You gave me my freedom,’ he said with more reverence than any other man had ever shown me, ‘and now you have given me my life. And alas, I can only serve you as I have always done.’

“‘That is enough, Hacho,’ I said, ‘and more than enough. Happy is the master who commands service such as yours.’

“Then I went into the house and learned that the cure came in an instant and at what must have been the very time when I was asking Jesus to heal him without coming under my roof. The word that had been spoken was enough. The disease was silently bidden to depart and it vanished even as an evil dream goes when one wakes from a troubled sleep.

“And now one question before I go. Those ruffians who attacked you — was there among them a man of distinguished presence and bearing who would not seem properly to belong to the robber class?”

“I noted no such man. Why do you ask?”

"Because one Zatthu, a Pharisee of Jerusalem, who had been stirring up trouble there, escaped from prison at Cæsarea a while ago and no one knows what has become of him. Some believe he has joined a gang of robbers; so I thought it worth while to inquire if you observed a man of his stamp in the crew that assaulted you. I am myself of the opinion that he has gone back to Jerusalem and is in hiding there."

"Was it there that he was first arrested and made prisoner?"

"Yes; a little while before the Passover."

"Would he not then fear to return where he must be well known?"

"Yes, if he were to continue his troublesome activity and show himself in public. But plotting seems to be his occupation, and he could plot in secret there with those who are eager for Rome's overthrow."

"You speak as if they might possibly accomplish it."

"No, they could never accomplish it. Rome is too strong for them. But they are fierce zealots and some day there may be a mighty uprising here. The Jews are restless under our rule and sedition makers like Zatthu need to be watched. But farewell; and may you soon be on your feet again."

"Farewell, but do not wait for that to come about. Come soon."

XI

"In my heart, though, I am not so eager to have him come again right away," said Aristarchus as Zattu came forth from his place of concealment after Marcus had gone. "My friend the centurion asked me some questions I had to dodge as best I could. But I evaded them and you see he had no suspicion that you are in Capernaum."

"It grieved me that you had to evade. He is your friend, and with a friend one does not like to be anything but frank."

"We shall be friends through everything. Never fear. And what do you think of him?"

"He is plainly upright and kind. But I cannot respect his judgment and clear-sightedness as you do. He is too credulous."

"Because he sees virtue in the man Jesus?"

"Because, first of all, he seems to have failed to understand that fanatical John the Baptist. A wretched impostor he is. I went out from Jerusalem to hear him myself. A slanderous talker I found him to be; a man who wins favor with the common people by abusing those who are their natural leaders."

"You may be right. All that I have heard about him has made me believe him a man of sincerity and courage."

"Your judgment is too generous. Such men do only harm. They turn the people to folly and unsettle their minds. And this Jesus of Nazareth is plainly a man of just that sort."

"Do you feel sure of that without having ever seen him?"

"Perfectly sure. All that your friend Marcus said confirmed me in my opinion. And he himself seems to look at men through his sympathy and to take them at their own estimate of themselves."

"You would be far from saying that if you knew him well.

He is the keenest reader of men I have ever been acquainted with."

"I find it hard to believe it. He shows mere weakness in so bowing down to this Jesus, this son of a carpenter. Why, he speaks of him as if he were a god!"

"Perhaps he is."

"What? Are you so credulous too?"

"Not credulous; only willing, like our Socrates, to keep the mind open to what is new and strange."

"Marcus the centurion I call truly credulous. He believes what his impulses and emotions tell him to believe. That cure of his servant was certainly imagined. The disease left the man suddenly as diseases often do and it was thought a miracle."

"He says he has seen Jesus perform many acts of healing and the people are all believing in him in consequence."

"That is what distresses me. The people are so easily won over by false teachers. They went in crowds after John the Baptist. Now they are following this son of a carpenter because they think he can cure their diseases. It makes me unhappy. How can they be made to follow their true leaders against Rome when they listen to the voices of vulgar fanatics?"

"I do not wonder at your distress of mind. It would be hard indeed if your plans should be upset by a false prophet who led the people astray. But do not let yourself be down-hearted till you have seen this man yourself and formed your own opinion of him."

"That I must do, and I must do it quickly. It would be dangerous to linger long in Capernaum with such a man as this centurion on the lookout for me, even if he does think I am now at Jerusalem."

"As I have told you before, I do not think you need hurry away. Be wary; that is all."

"Be wary! Advice, alas, that is only too good and sound.

The man who would free his country from a hated rule must always be wary till the day of open conflict comes. What escapes I shall have, what pursuers I shall need to throw off, what hiding places I shall seek, how long I shall be hunted and how many times betrayed, no one can say. But the loyalty of your own friendship I shall never doubt. Once more from my heart I thank you for it. Still, I must not remain here and by chance bring you and myself also into trouble. I will seek out the leaders of my people here and confer with them. I will try to find this man Jesus and judge him by what I hear him say and see him do. Then I must go from place to place in Galilee and make my people ready for the swelling of Jordan."

"And when the river rises, may it sweep your enemies away!"

XII

Zatthu left his host's bedside to seek acquaintance among his own people in the city. First, however, he went to the house where Kelita and Shobek were lodging. From them he would fain get knowledge of this strange man who seemed to have risen like a threatening cloud on the horizon of his own activity.

He found his two friends. Yes, they had heard of Jesus. They had indeed heard much about him. He was in the mouths of all Capernaum.

"Why then did you not speak of him this morning?" was Zatthu's inquiry.

"My one thought was for your safety," answered Kelita. "Moreover, I think but poorly of him. His day will soon pass."

"Have you seen him?"

"Just once. Shobek and I met him as he and a crowd of his followers were entering the city. He had been to some neighboring town and was coming back to his home here. A throng gathered about him as soon as he was seen approaching. If he had been a king he couldn't have caused more clamor and excitement. But give no thought to him. He hasn't it in him to head a great movement or to be a leader."

"Why do you think so?"

"He has no power. I cannot think of him as like Moses, or Joshua, or Saul. He is too mild."

"He has power to make the people flock to him."

"Yes, like sheep; the multitudes who are blind and easily led."

"They think he heals them of their diseases."

"They will soon find out they were mistaken and fall away from him."

"Perhaps they are not mistaken," interposed Shobek.

"Do you believe in him?" asked Zatthu searchingly.

"I believe him to be great and good, and no impostor."

"You would leave me for him — for him, the son of a carpenter?"

"Do not say it! Do not think it! I would die for you and the cause."

"But if you had to choose between him and me?"

"That could never be. He is not like you. He is trying to make the people live better lives. He would never lead them to rise against Rome."

"But he is doing great mischief. He is drawing to himself the very people I must win to make the cause succeed. Upon you, Shobek, I fear he has cast a spell. But I must go among the Pharisees and the elders of the synagogue and learn what they think of this man who would make us believe he wields the rod of Moses."

Exactly this Zatthu now began to do, though he proceeded warily; for Rome's spies were everywhere and he had to remember that at Jerusalem some of his own countrymen had been corrupted by Roman gold. So it was only to a few Hebrews of established repute and character that he revealed his identity.

The house to which he went first was that of Baruch, a synagogue elder and a partner in a thriving business. The business was indeed the same as that conducted by Zatthu's brother; and the two houses had long had an intimate association. But Baruch had, like Zatthu, a brother who took upon himself all commercial dealings; and Baruch was thus left free to devote most of his time to scholarly pursuits to which his somewhat indolent nature had always been inclined. But Zatthu's name strongly stirred him and his greeting was most hearty.

"I am delighted to see you," he exclaimed, when Zatthu was ushered into his presence. "This is an honor indeed. If

in any way I can serve you, you have only to let me know. Your brother has sent me word that you are to have whatever you may need in the way of money."

"Money. Money," said Zatthu slowly. "I have deeper needs than money."

"And those too I would gladly satisfy," said Baruch, more eagerly than thoughtfully or prudently.

"Then you believe in the cause to which I am giving all my heart and life?"

Baruch did not answer at once. Zatthu measured him while he sat silent and slightly embarrassed. He was a middle-aged man, with a kindly eye and features that betokened a reflective rather than a resolute mind. His face indeed bore the stamp of his sedentary ways. "He is well named Baruch and not Barak," thought Zatthu. "He may be 'blessed,' but he will never be as a 'thunder-bolt' to the enemies of Israel."

"Yes, surely I believe in the cause," presently came Baruch's answer. "Every true patriot must believe that our nation is to be freed from Roman tyranny. But the time? The time? The young lion might be gored on the horns of the wild ox. He must have his growth to make all creatures fear him."

"And Israel has had two thousand years to grow in."

"True. True. But this is a troublous question. My own wisdom is not fit to cope with it. Shall I not go and bring others whose opinions are weightier than mine?"

"By all means. But shall I not go with you?"

"Nothing escapes Rome's eyes. Better not be seen on the streets with me. I shall come back speedily. Meanwhile my house is yours."

Left to himself Zatthu thought not without amusement that Baruch had ill-concealed his real anxiety. Plainly he was afraid of being seen in public with a man whom the Romans were eager to capture and put to death. But he was

too thoroughly used to men and their ways to be perturbed, and he had not long to wait. Baruch shortly returned with three companions, all of them manifestly men of rank and dignity, and one of them of winning and noble presence. Hardly thirty, he seemed already to have acquired the weight and authority that belongs to matured wisdom and solid worth of character.

"This is my friend Joiada," said Baruch; "and with him are Meremoth and Hariph. They have all been only too glad to come and greet Zatthu to whom our whole nation is looking in these troublous days."

"Glad indeed we are," said Joiada, grasping Zatthu warmly by the hand. "Unfortunate you have been; but your courage is equal to that of the great Maccabees."

"And that you will not always be unfortunate, we earnestly hope and pray," added Meremoth, as he and Hariph also warmly greeted Zatthu.

"But it is more than hopes and prayers that I need," was the instant answer. "I need to find Israel standing as one man behind me. Shall I really find it so?"

"Let us all be seated and discuss this great question at our leisure," remarked Baruch. "I will have wine brought and its cheer will mellow and ripen our wisdom."

All seated themselves and Baruch continued to talk in a light vein till the wine was served. Already Zatthu read mild disapproval in the minds of these countrymen whose support he ardently desired; and his host's genial chatter was a thin disguise of a fact already patent. But Zatthu was never daunted by lack of sympathy and never anything but direct in his appeals for faith and devotion. Turning to Joiada he said,

"No one of you has answered my question. Will you not tell me whether you think I can unite all Israel against Rome?"

"I do not believe you can," was the firm but quiet answer.

"Why not?"

"Rome's hand is heavy. Israel will not invite it to smite till she does not fear the blow."

"The blow need not be feared."

"What will be Israel's shield?"

"Jehovah."

"Amen," said Joiada, reverently bowing his head. "I honor your faith. If I had it, I would follow wherever you led."

"Every true son of Israel ought to have it. It must come. It is the only thing needed to make Jehovah blast our enemies."

"It will not come till we have turned from our evil ways. We are too proud. We are too corrupt. What we need is one to make us humble and lead us into better ways; and the leader has come."

"Who?"

"Jesus of Nazareth."

"Do you believe in that son of a carpenter?"

"I do."

"But he scorns our men of weight and learning and makes friends with the common and unclean!"

"As Jehovah would do perhaps were he here among us."

"But surely he deludes the people."

"No, he only heals their diseases."

"Do you really believe he does?"

"I know he does, for I have seen him."

"The Pharisees at Jerusalem spurned him."

"Not all. My cousin Nicodemus honored and revered him."

"Is Nicodemus the Pharisee your cousin?"

"He is. Do you know him?"

"Not intimately; well enough to admire him. He is sound of judgment, honest and upright."

"Did he give you support?"

“Not actively. I am sure he was not hostile to my purpose.”

“I am convinced he would not now approve of it. He thinks as I do, that our faith is to be increased not by raising the standard of revolt, but by following a man of blameless life like Jesus of Nazareth.”

Not very much more was said. Joiada's words made a deep impression upon Zatthu. His mood had become reflective. His burning faith had lost a little of its glow. A few further inquiries he made of Joiada in order to find how positive and direct was his knowledge of the cures that Jesus had wrought. To every question Joiada answered that he had seen with his own eyes and that he knew he had not been mistaken or deceived. His plain, unequivocal statements seemed to create a subdued and sober mood in all who were present, and after a short time the gathering dispersed. When Zatthu found himself alone with Baruch he availed himself of the ready proffer of financial aid; for he could not but reflect that the future was uncertain and might bring him into straits that money would relieve. Then, well supplied with gold and silver, he wended his way, by no means eagerly or exultantly, to the mansion of his host.

XIII

With the slow tread of one lost in meditation, Zatthu entered the house so generously opened to him. Passing into the atrium he saw Thisoa. She was seated by the fountain and listening to its splashing waters. Their cooling sound made this a favorite resort of hers on the hot summer days. Here she was wont to bring a parchment roll and read, attentively or listlessly as inclination bade. A scroll she had now, but it was not engrossing her attention. She was letting it rest in her lap and her thoughts were far away.

Instinctively Zatthu drew near to her. He did so as naturally as the forest wanderer goes where he sees the light appearing through the trees. The laws of spiritual gravitation may be made clear in a world less material than this. Here men obey without always being conscious that they are doing so.

Thisoa greeted him with a cordial smile, as he seated himself near her.

"You look grave," she said. "Will you not tell me what is on your mind? Does your sacred cause not find due encouragement?"

Zatthu was slow in replying and he looked musingly before him, not at Thisoa, as he said,

"Would that the great Jehovah, who reads our thoughts as an open book, would let us see and know others as He sees and knows them."

"Surely that would not be well for us. It would make us gods, not men."

"True, but sometimes it would so help us to be just."

"And what mind would you now read and understand?"

"Have you heard of that strange man, Jesus of Nazareth?"

"Surely. Who in Capernaum, who I might say in Galilee,

has not heard of him? He, more than any one, was talked about during the time my father was away."

"And what have you heard?"

"That he healed the sick, the halt and the blind, and that the people followed him wherever he went."

"And how much of this have you believed?"

"Little. Next to nothing. People are easily deceived. The power of Jesus will soon pass. It is you, not he, that is to break the yoke that rests upon your nation."

"It must be so. The elders here are said to view this man with distrust. Yet some there are who believe in him. Some have witnessed his cures and say there is no doubt whatever that they were really performed."

"Again I say, people are easily deceived. Believe in yourself. Jesus is but for a day. He will not stand in the way of your great mission."

"In my heart I feel that to be true. Yet I would not be unjust. That is why I wished that Jehovah might sometimes pour light into our minds. If he is greater than I, gladly would I follow him."

"Why not seek him and measure him yourself?"

"That I must do. But I have to proceed with caution. You know I am an outlaw."

"True. But no one knows you here but your own elders to whom you reveal yourself; and they will never betray you. You will easily find opportunity to meet with Jesus who is often in Capernaum. When you do so you will find, I am sure, that he is not one whom you either have to dread or to follow. Dismiss all apprehension from your mind and tell me more of your people's history. Their story is so strange and wonderful I find it hard to believe it, and yet it bears the stamp of truth."

This was a request that Zatthu was only too willing to grant. Long and eloquently he talked of his people's past to a rapt and unwearied listener.

XIV

Justice and reform were never brothers. The reformer is and should be the man of one idea. To look on both sides of any and every question is not his habit; to look on both sides of the cause to which he gives all his mind and all his heart is more than can be asked of him.

And Zatthu had the reformer's temper. His mind was dominated and absorbed by his one great purpose. Yet that he was not a bigot has been already shown. Had he been one he would never have become Aristarchus' guest, or conceived so reverent a regard for his wife and daughter. The fiery and unhallowed zeal which justifies every means that can accomplish the wished-for end was indeed foreign to Zatthu's nature. His character was natively a noble one. It had been elevated and broadened by the grand and austere figures that illumined his people's history. Moses' sublime self-abnegation, Samuel's unwavering obedience to God's voice and David's ready forgiveness of Saul's blind rage and jealousy, had deeply impressed his mind.

Hence it was that he could not countenance Kelita's summary and vindictive methods. Hence it was that Shobek's deep-seated kindness made a strong appeal to him. And hence it was that he feared to judge harshly of the very man he instinctively turned against and condemned. Jesus of Nazareth was ever in his thoughts. The devotion caused by this new leader naturally roused his jealousy, for Zatthu was very human. When he overheard Marcus tell his strange tale of healing, he could not help setting down the man who was thought to have wrought the miracle as an imposter. But this mood of resentment had, as we have seen, been succeeded by a humbler one. He had been wholly sincere in telling Thisoa that he was ready to follow and not to lead if that was Jehovah's will. What he wanted was the truth.

If he could really find it, he could humble himself even as David did when he bowed his sinful will to that of God who rebuked him by taking away his son.

But how to find the truth? It was in search of it that he went forth the morning after his conversation with Thisoa talk with Jesus if he could. At any rate he would learn about him from every one who could give him trustworthy information.

Naturally however he thought of the Pharisees and the synagogue elders of the city as those on whose opinions he could best rely. It was with such that he had had converse on the day before. If he had found irresolution instead of stalwart courage, timidity instead of faith, and credulity instead of penetration in the one man, Joiada, whose strength by the plashing waters of the atrium. He would see and of mind had most impressed him, this was nothing more than he must be prepared for. It was the part of the man of faith to make his own illumination scatter the clouds of doubt.

He did not now succeed in finding Jesus himself. Jesus, as he learned regretfully, was somewhere in the neighboring country, teaching and healing as was his wont. It was from a common toiler whom he accosted in the street that he learned this. The man had met him while coming from his little farm to sell figs in the city. The rustic seemed intelligent. Zatthu thought it worth while to question him.

"Have you ever listened to this man Jesus?" he inquired.

"Yes; and I would gladly listen again."

"Why so?"

"His words are good. They sounded to me as if our great Jehovah had put them into his mouth."

"And have you seen him heal those that were ailing? They say he does this."

"They say truly. My neighbor Uel has had the palsy for seven years. Jesus touched him and at once he became well

and sound. And he cured my sister Deborah of a fever by laying hands upon her."

"These cures you have seen with your own eyes?"

"With my own eyes."

"Have you seen a leper cleansed?"

"No, but I am sure he could do it."

Zatthu turned and went upon his way. Was not this last remark significant? he thought. Did it not even go far to explain the belief of Joiada in the cures of Jesus? People, he reflected, believe what they wish to believe — not realizing that he himself was illustrating this very truth. This farmer he had talked with had been won by Jesus' manner of speech and had come to believe in him blindly. Had not Joiada done the same? He was beginning to think so in spite of the fact that Joiada had the day previous impressed him as a man of discerning and independent mind.

Thus ready to be confirmed in what he wanted to believe, he found his way to the house of a synagogue elder whom he knew to be expecting him. Baruch had advised him by all means to confer with Rehum, a man of great weight and influence in the synagogue. To make a meeting possible Baruch had promised to go to him and ask him to remain at home this morning.

Positive indeed Zatthu instantly saw his character to be. Rehum was a man of aggressive and dominating personality. Large of stature, erect, well formed, he carried himself among men as a mastiff goes among dogs too small to be worthy of serious notice. Failure to agree with him caused him surprise; opposition roused his resentment. Yet his face showed cunning as well as strength. The keen bright eye was always searching others as if to find weakness of which it could take advantage.

So thoroughly virile was the man's presence that Zatthu felt as if he had received a challenge the moment he entered the house and Rehum stood before him. His doubting and

reflective mood, already on the way to changing, now vanished almost as quickly as a breath of vapor on a wintry morning. Here was an Israelite to be conquered and subdued. This will that clearly warred for self must be made to war for Jehovah. The meeting of the two men brought conflict as inevitably as the meeting of two skilled swordsmen fighting on opposing sides.

"Welcome," exclaimed Rehum, "right welcome is Zatthu to this humble abode. The eagle whose wing is broken may well hide from the hunter in the dove's house."

Zatthu could have smiled at the mock humility of this speech had not the implied taunt nettled him. Meeting steadily the scrutinizing gaze that was fixed upon him, he replied,

"And what of the hunter who faces the angry lion weaponless?"

"A tree perhaps gives safety."

"No, Jehovah."

So solemnly were these words uttered that Rehum could but bow his head. As he lifted it the look he gave his visitor showed more of curiosity than of arrogance. It was an unwonted experience for him to be forced into showing respect for another's speech. What manner of man was this who had so quickly put him half in the wrong? Motioning Zatthu to a seat with more of respect than his manner often showed, he said courteously,

"Jehovah would indeed seem to have protected you. The story of your escape from prison I have heard. It was wonderful."

"If we do Jehovah's will, we may expect wonders."

"And you are doing it?" came the query with a return of the native arrogance.

"I am."

"Then will Jehovah surely give you success."

"Not while men like you stand aside and doubt. Not even

Moses could enter the promised land on account of the people's rebelliousness and lack of faith."

"Moses became Israel's leader after he had seen the burning bush. Have you seen one?"

"No, nor did David see one ere he faced Goliath. Yet was David called to destroy Israel's enemy. So am I."

"You are quite sure?"

The moment Rehum put this question Zatthu felt that he had triumphed. This man whose wont it was to browbeat was for the moment not aggressive. He was like one who in a sword bout parries instead of thrusts. To be sure there was irony in his query. Still, it opened the way for an attack. The attack was vigorously made.

"Yes, I am sure," replied Zatthu with flashing eye and voice not loud but charged with feeling. "My call is that of David. It comes from the God of our nation. He it is that has made me see Israel lie bleeding at the feet of Rome. He it is that has bade me count her cruel wounds and mourn for her vanished glory and her lost dominion. He it is that has bade me put courage in her heart and raise her to her feet. And the faith I have, the unshakable faith that Jehovah Himself will smite the Romans as He smote the Egyptians long ago — whence comes it? It comes only from Jehovah. He has planted this conviction in my heart as surely as He made Deborah know that the Canaanites would flee before the son of Abinoam. Israel has only to rise and her enemies will be scattered. And they who work this great deliverance will be of the Lord's chosen ones. To them will He give honor and a name that Israel will cherish from generation to generation."

Zatthu had triumphed. He had struck the right chord. Rehum was none the less a patriot because he was overbearing. His hatred of Rome was fanatical. To see this alien power overthrown was his ardent longing. It was not indeed a wholly unselfish one. He was exceedingly ambitious. All

his life he had coveted high station and renown. And here was a man who might give him his desire. As Zatthu spoke he was impressed by his power. He could not afford to have him anything but a friend. Hardly had he concluded when Rehum said, deliberately but with unmistakable sincerity,

"I truly believe that you have been called by Jehovah. You are to restore Israel to greatness. I will stand by your side when the time is ripe. Every Hebrew patriot must do the same."

"They must. They must. When the hour comes how can they hold aloof? And yet only yesterday I found lukewarmness, I might almost say condemnation, right here in Capernaum."

"Who could have been so faint-hearted, so unloyal?"

"Baruch, Meremoth, Hariph, and above all Joiada."

"And why should Joiada, a man by no means weak or faltering, be so perverse?"

"He believes we are down-trodden because of our sins. He looks to Jesus, the carpenter's son, to turn us to repentance and upbuild our nation."

A frown came over Rehum's face.

"Jesus the carpenter's son! Jesus of Nazareth!" he exclaimed in tones full of scorn and bitterness. "Is it possible that Joiada is misled by that impostor? He is deceiving the ignorant unwashed multitudes, but I should not have expected a man of Joiada's clear strong mind to be thus deluded. I am indeed surprised. I must see him and convince him of his error."

"Then you believe Jesus is a man himself deluded and deluding others?"

"Deluding? Yes, basely and wickedly deluding all who will listen to him. But deluded? No! He is scheming to exalt himself by profaning what is sacred. He is false. He is a menace to our nation."

"Pray give me your grounds for thinking so."

“Say rather for knowing so; for there is not the smallest doubt in my mind about it. Yes, I will do so gladly. If you have any feeling whatever that there is aught in this deceiver to commend or to admire, I would fain destroy it utterly.”

Thereupon Rehum launched into a full and scathing review of what Jesus had said and done in and about Capernaum. Into this story was poured the high-caste Hebrew’s scorn of the lowly man who was not imbued with the spirit of ancient usage and tradition. The tradition was sacred. Redemption could only come through absolute obedience to its behests. To violate it was to sin against Jehovah. And this Jesus whom the people were running after held it as naught. How quickly and how terribly were those punished who treated lightly the Ark of the Covenant! Time had passed. The Ark and the Temple of Solomon that held it had vanished from the earth. But the spirit of Jehovah which made the Ark a holy thing was in the Law that Jehovah himself had spoken to His chosen people. This law the man of Nazareth held in contempt. In thus dealing with it he was as truly guilty of profanation as those who had wantonly handled the Ark in the days of old. Such sacrilege was sure to be punished. All those who were led astray by this man’s teachings would sometime atone for their folly.

Long was the story. Rehum had an intimate knowledge of the doings of Jesus. He knew what places he visited; what company he kept; what discourses he held; and what cures and miracles he was believed to have performed. His life as it was then being lived was minutely scrutinized; and a false coloring was given to every word he uttered and every deed he did.

But to Zatthu the coloring seemed true. He listened with rapt attention and with an ever growing conviction that he was finding the true explanation of this strange and puzzling career. The man of Nazareth could be nothing but an impostor. To think of him as a leader who could heal and lift

up the nation was mere folly. Joiada and all who thought with him would some day find this out to their great sorrow. They were misguided men, to be pitied because they were so blind.

The long interview ended, Zatthu and Rehum parted as friends. Each felt that he had an ally and a helper in the other, though the help that Zatthu proffered was for his people solely, while Rehum mingled thoughts of self-advancement with patriotic hopes and aspirations.

XV

From Rehum Zatthu went directly to the house of his host. Reaching and entering it he proceeded to the atrium as he had done on the day before. Hardly did he expect to see Thisoa again sitting there; yet he was disappointed not to find her. There were things that he greatly wished to say to her. The conversation they had had was to be resumed. Before, she had been positive, he doubtful. Now, it would be the other way. He, the man, would be positive, aggressively so, as a man should be. She, the woman, could now but acquiesce in his own deep-rooted and unshakable convictions.

He seated himself by the fountain, but he was hardly conscious of the tinkling of its waters. His mind was on the interview with Rehum and on his great purpose which that interview had so mightily strengthened. But even while he was thinking over what had passed between himself and the zealous Hebrew elder, Thisoa appeared. Seeing Zatthu, she went to him at once. She opened her mouth to speak, and then stopped. Such a look of satisfaction and self-confidence did Zatthu give her that she could not but contrast his manner and bearing with that she had noted the day before. He did not himself speak; and after a moment of keen observation she said,

"You are no longer in doubt. Your mind is made up. I can see that plainly. Pray tell me your thought, then, if it is not too sacred to be revealed."

"I was wishing to tell it to you. I was wishing to take up again what was said between us yesterday about the man Jesus. You were right. He is but for a day. He is unworthy to lead our nation."

"I am so rejoiced that you can be sure of this and see your own way clearly. But are you willing to tell me what has brought you to think thus?"

"The things seen and heard by one of our Pharisees here. He is a man thoroughly true to our sacred laws and he is shocked and outraged by the things that Jesus does."

"What manner of things?"

"He mingles freely with publicans and sinners. He even sits down and eats with them."

"Is that a bad thing to do?"

"How can you ask?" said Zatthu, looking at her in astonishment. "And yet," he quickly added, "I forgot. You are not one of us. You do not know how rigid are the laws given us by Moses. They were made known to him by Jehovah Himself who chose us to be His own people and who wished to keep us pure from all contamination with unclean and idolatrous tribes. It is from ourselves that our redemption and deliverance must come. The man who is to raise us up and lead us to new greatness must not only be a Hebrew of the Hebrews; he must gather about him only those of his own race. To parley with publicans and sinners, to make friends with them, eat with them and use them to win power, is nothing less than to be a traitor to Judæa."

"I suppose you are right. But if these men would lift the sword against Rome, why not win them and use them?"

"Because they could not be true patriots. They are not of God's chosen ones. They would betray us in the hour of need."

"And Jesus makes friends with them as readily as with his own people?"

"Even more readily. He seems even to prefer to sit at table with them and thus cast a slight upon the Pharisees who ought to be his chosen companions."

"And some of these men you say are evil?"

"Yes; men who are careless of themselves, who do all manner of things forbidden by our laws. They are men whom our Pharisees could not touch with their skirts without feeling that they had been defiled."

"May it not be pure kindness that makes Jesus treat them as friends? He heals their ailments, they think at least. They flock to him out of gratitude. He is too kind-hearted to turn them away."

"If he were a true Hebrew, he would not trample our laws under foot by consorting with them and letting them touch his person."

"Is he so familiar with them?"

"I have not yet seen him myself. I tried to do so, but he has not been in Capernaum today. So I can only judge by what I hear, and I cannot deny that these common and unclean people who follow him seem to reverence him and feel a certain awe in his presence. Yet he sometimes allows a strange, yes, a really shocking familiarity."

"And you were told instances of this?"

"Yes; and one, of which I hardly know how to speak. It made the Pharisees who witnessed it hot with wrath and I shared their indignation when I was told of it. But as I see your sympathy makes you palliate these things that so outrage a Hebrew's sense of what is fit, I must show you how this man shocks and offends us.

"A few days ago one of our Pharisees feasted him. Into the house went some of the common crew who are ever around the man. It was an abuse of the generously proffered hospitality, but the Pharisee was too courteous to object. But while they were sitting at table, in came a woman who should not have been allowed to enter any house of uprightness. While all looked on in amazement, she went straight to Jesus, knelt at his feet, which she washed with her tears and then wiped with her loose-flowing hair and anointed with a very precious ointment. It was such a scandalous scene that some of Jesus' own followers protested; but he rebuked them, let the woman do as she would and sent her away with a kindly word."

With downcast eyes Thisoa listened to this narration which

was given with no little feeling. It brought no tinge of color to her face, but it made her very grave and thoughtful. The acquiescence that Zatthu had expected from her was slow in coming. Now that he had turned wholly against Jesus, she found that a feeling in his favor was unexpectedly arising in herself.

How baseless is the idea that the well rounded character has been ripened only by the altruism of today! Epaminondas was as just and unselfish as Washington. The mother of the Scipios could not be surpassed in depth and nobleness of feeling. It was a woman's tenderness that saved Moses for his mighty destiny, and that compassionate daughter of Pharaoh was surely only one of a countless multitude of sweet-natured women. To Thisoa the readiness of Jesus to make friends with the lowly and to be gracious to an erring woman brought no shock and no feeling of condemnation. Rather did her large and generous nature respond to these proofs of a boundless human sympathy. Every age finds its needed leaven in those who rise above its conventions. Thisoa was one of these. In her heart she felt a strong desire to see and know this man who refused to be cast in the mould of Hebrew tradition. At the same time she could do full justice to Zatthu's attitude and could believe a man like him must be the deliverer of his nation. The Jews had an unexampled pride of race. That was but too apparent. The books they profoundly revered seemed to justify them in holding themselves aloof from all other peoples and believing themselves called to an unparalleled destiny. All this being so, it was only one who was of the purest blood and who rigidly regarded every established Hebrew tradition that they could follow in the path to liberty and great achievement. From Jesus they might get moral uplift, and possibly healing, though that she still gravely doubted; it was only from Zatthu that they could get national salvation.

Yet was not Zatthu himself doing the very thing he con-

demned in Jesus? Repulsed by some of Capernaum's leading Pharisees, he was finding shelter and seeking sympathy under her father's roof. Partly in a spirit of mischief, partly to bring him face to face with his own inconsistency, she ended the silence at which he had been wondering by a query that was fairly startling.

"But are not you," she asked, "doing the same violence to your sacred traditions that Jesus has been doing? You say he is a traitor to Judæa because he parleys with publicans and sinners, makes friends with them, eats with them and uses them to win power. Yet you have become the guest-friend of my father and your plans to free Judæa you unfold to us, who are of those very aliens your people look upon with aversion, and from us you seem to hope for sympathy and encouragement."

"And reasonably so," exclaimed Zatthu, who had listened to these words with a shock of surprise but was ready and even eager to defend himself. "You may well think me inconsistent, but really I am not so. I am not making friends with publicans, with rough unwashed men, with those who have strayed into ways miry and unclean. Should the standard of revolt be raised and should such as these array themselves beneath it, I should say the great Jehovah had made them his instruments and it was not for man with his frail wisdom to rebuff them. But I should never seek such allies. I am not seeking them. It is only to the men of influence and learning, only to the men of unmingled Hebrew blood that I am resorting and making known my purpose. And was it not through your father's earnest solicitation that I came here under this roof? Has it not been at your own earnest request that I have told you of my great ambition to free my country? And what a kindly and hearty response I found! What sympathy have you not shown! Do not, I pray you, think that I am to be likened to this strange and erring son of a

carpenter because I count among my friends the inmates of this generous and noble household!"

"I am answered," said Thisoa smilingly. "I will not think of my father and mother, who are of earth's noblest and best, as like the rude and perhaps uncleanly people whom Jesus seeks to know and help. And while I cannot help admiring him for the kindness of heart he shows in thus befriending the needy and the lowly, I think his conduct shows that not to him could the Hebrews look for a leader to deliver them from Rome. It is a man like you who is to shatter the tyranny that binds and crushes you. Yes, and the man is you."

"I humbly hope so. As I have said, I feel that I have heard Jehovah calling me to free my country."

"You will free it. Of that I feel sure. And when you have freed it, how will you rule it and make it great? Will this Jesus have no part in building it up and giving it the commanding place among the nations of the world?"

A frown gathered over Zattu's face.

"You seem greatly interested in this carpenter's son," he said, eyeing his questioner searchingly. "Why is it so?"

"Because all that you tell of him makes me think him a man of a peculiarly noble character, even if I cannot regard him as raised up to free Judæa."

"Is it noble to make light of sin; to scoff at our sacred traditions; to trick and deceive the multitudes; and to use strange, unholy powers for his own fame and influence?"

"Does he use strange, unholy powers?"

"Yes, even like those of the Egyptian priests who turned their rods into serpents, or like those of the Witch of Endor who called up Samuel's spirit at the bidding of King Saul."

"Can you give me an instance of this?"

"What he did in the country of the Gadarenes is proof of it. For there he made tormenting spirits leave a man they were haunting and pass into a herd of swine; whereupon the swine rushed down into the Sea of Galilee and were drowned."

"How about the man? Was he truly freed from the tormenting spirits?"

"Of that I have my doubts. I only know that the swine were drowned."

"But the one thing I should wish to know is, whether the man was cured. If he was, I should not call the power that cured him an unholy power."

"You puzzle me. You seem to esteem this Jesus highly and to see good in everything he does; while only yesterday you had nothing but condemnation for him."

"You must remember that I am not a Hebrew. In seeking the neglected, the unclean and the despised, Jesus offends your reverence for the traditions of your nation; but it is in doing just this that he commends himself to me. I can understand how you, a Hebrew, count it a sacred duty to keep your race strain pure. If you are Jehovah's chosen people, you must do just this, or He would no longer regard you with especial favor. But I am a Greek; and though the Greeks have pride of race, I cannot help admiring a man who, like Jesus, likes to mingle with the lowly and despised."

"Even though he makes friends with sinners?"

"You say he makes friends with them. Just what do you mean by that? Does he go about with them and count them among his immediate followers?"

"I could not say that. I do not really know. But he certainly passes over their misdeeds as if they were nothing."

"Perhaps in that he is wrong. I am not sure. I want to see him, to know of his daily life and doings. He makes me think of our Socrates who went about the streets of Athens gladly talking with any who would hear him. But I will say no more about this strange man who is making friends of the poor and the unknown, and enemies of those your men of wisdom and authority revere. Do not for a moment think my growing interest in Jesus lessens my belief in your own mission. It is you who are to set your country free. I have

already said it and I say it now again! You are called and inspired to do this mighty thing. From the bottom of my heart I am thankful that you see it and that all your doubts are cleared. Go forth and do it. Your Jehovah will not let you fail."

Zatthu was too deeply moved by these words of confidence to make any reply. He showed his feeling by a look of gratitude, excused himself and went to his room with a great joy in his heart. At no time had he felt more sure that his task was a divinely appointed one. The cloud that had seemed to gather over his pathway had been dispelled. False leaders might arise and have their little day. But it was he, Zatthu, that was to bring a new and glorious day to Israel.

XVI

The next day was the Sabbath. Eagerly had Zatthu looked forward to it. At the synagogue would then be gathered a goodly representation of his people. He would see them and measure them. Already practiced in reading the mind of an assembly, he could almost surely tell whether here in this populous Galilean city there were the seeds that his fiery zeal could ripen into a harvest. To be sure, the time for his labors was not now. He was an outlaw. In the city was a Roman garrison. At the head of it was a centurion peculiarly vigilant and discerning. But if the spirit of patriotism were truly in the hearts of the people, it could be stirred in Jehovah's own time.

It was therefore in a very earnest mood that Zatthu started forth to attend the ritual in the synagogue. He was going among friends, and not a shadow of apprehension troubled his mind. Of the exciting experiences the day was to bring he had no forecast. Having allowed himself ample time, he strolled in a leisurely manner along the streets. The air was still. His mind was as peaceful as the quiet summer morning.

He had reached the door of the synagogue when he heard voices chanting together somewhere in the open. Instead of entering he stopped and listened. The voices began to sound nearer, and the tramp of feet was heard. In a moment the company of singers passed from a cross street into the one on which the synagogue was situated and came full into view.

The words they sang could now be heard distinctly by Zatthu and the little group of onlookers that had gathered at the door of the synagogue. They were chanting the hundred and twenty-second Psalm which so perfectly expresses the spirit of joyous worship:

I was glad when they said unto me
Let us go into the house of Jehovah.

The company was not numerous — some three score men and women — but they chanted the solemn words with deep feeling, as if they came from their hearts. For a moment Zatthu was thrilled by the lofty strains that so nobly voiced the spiritual faith of Israel. “Surely,” he thought, “my people is Jehovah’s people. No other has ever uttered so sublime a note of praise.” But his thought was quickly turned from the song to those who were so devoutly rendering it.

At their head walked a man whom all were plainly recognizing as their leader. His step was not stately or majestic. The homage he commanded was not given for any assumption of superiority or any outward show of pride. Altogether quiet and modest was his bearing. As he drew near no sign of elation could be seen in his pure grave countenance. He looked straight before him as he walked along, yet his eyes did not seem to be fixed on the things that were within their gaze. It was as if they were peering through the curtain of earthly substance into what was spiritual and eternal. Zatthu gazed at him with ever growing interest as he approached. He did not need the whispered comments of those around him to tell him that this was Jesus of Nazareth.

As the company drew near to the synagogue, this man who had seemed so unconscious of what was passing around him turned and lifted up his hand. Instantly every voice was hushed. Only the steady tramp of feet was now heard as the throng passed up to the steps of the synagogue. Still gazing intently at its leader, Zatthu was surprised and even startled to see that those eyes, seemingly so unmindful of what was near, were looking directly into his own. They looked appealingly and the look was not at once withdrawn. For Jesus had stopped as he came opposite to Zatthu, and almost did it seem as if he would speak to him. But no words came, though Zatthu had a strange feeling that the searching gaze directed at him was reading all the secrets of his soul. He

could not meet that earnest wistful look. He glanced downward for a moment and when he lifted his eyes again, Jesus had passed on.

Perturbed by this unexpected meeting, Zatthu found it hard to command his thoughts and to give to the company that was passing into the synagogue after their leader the close survey he had had in mind. Yet he did note them cursorily, and in garb, bearing and all outward circumstance they were what he expected them to be. No Pharisees, no men of bland courtesy and polished speech were among them. Not a face that he saw showed the stamp of worldly wisdom or intellectual acquisitiveness. These were plain men, plainly or even coarsely garbed, roughened by wind and wave, begrimed with toil, well used to the supercilious frown and to the blows of adverse circumstance. Some faces indeed showed kindness without strength of will and bore witness to the gentle and benignant influence that was reaching men with generous hearts, mothers whose babes were blessed, and maids to whom purity spoke in tones they could not fail to understand. For a few sweet-faced mothers were in the motley throng, and young women also with countenances aglow with hope and joyousness. But it was on the men that Zatthu's gaze was fixed. It was the men of Judæa and Galilee who were to free the country if free it was to be. And these men were not the ones to whom a great movement of national deliverance should make its first appeal. Zatthu noted that there were none among them like the men of light and leading in Jerusalem whose minds and hearts he had stirred. His conclusions were confirmed. He turned and went into the synagogue with the deep conviction that Jesus was without the commanding qualities that are needed to lift a whole people into greatness. Lacking these, he played upon the feelings of the unthinking and built up a baseless power that would sometime crumble in a day. Perhaps he was more to be pitied than despised, was Zatthu's

thought. And yet he was haunted by that pleading wistful look.

In the synagogue he was not surprised to find that Jesus was to conduct the ritual and give the lesson for the day. This was so generally expected that the presiding elder could not stand in the way of it. Already obnoxious to most of the scribes and Pharisees of Capernaum, Jesus had yet such a following among the common people that what he wished was not easily gainsaid. Nor was Zatthu sorry to see him take his place on the platform to read to and instruct the gathering. The more he was brought forward the better. He would show his weaknesses and make it plain that he was no true leader for Israel.

And to Zatthu, as well as to the other Pharisees and to the elders there present, Jesus did indeed make his claim to leadership seem altogether preposterous. Yet it was by no manifestation of weakness that he did this. His offence lay rather in his lofty self-assertion. For after reading from Isaiah and ending with the words: "Wherefore do ye spend money for that which is not bread? and your labour for that which satisfieth not? hearken diligently unto me and eat ye that which is good, and let your soul delight itself in fatness," he declared that he alone could satisfy the hunger and thirst of the soul. Rising to a full consciousness of his Messiahship he cried: "He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, dwelleth in me, and I in him. As the living Father hath sent me, and I live by the Father; so he that eateth me even he shall live by me. This is that bread which came down from heaven: not as your fathers did eat manna, and are dead: he that eateth of this bread shall live forever."¹

Even to some of Jesus' own disciples this sublime assertion of Divine Sonship was so disconcerting that they pronounced it "an hard saying," and "they walked no more with him." To Zatthu it seemed nothing short of blasphemy, and it was

¹ See Saint John's Gospel, VI, 53-66, noting especially verses 59 and 66.

in wrath and fierce resentment that he rose to leave the synagogue as the service came to an end. But as he cast one glance about him before turning to the door, he saw that which drove every thought but that of instant personal safety completely out of his mind. He found himself looking into the eyes of the very Roman officer who had sat at Pilate's side when he was questioned and sentenced at Cæsarea. And the officer recognized him on the instant, as Zatthu clearly saw. He must get out of the synagogue at once and hasten from it with the utmost speed.

Fortunately he was close to the door. Having lingered outside till Jesus and his followers had passed in, he had found the building full and had not pressed to the front. And, fortunately again, the man he must escape from had been in one of the very front seats. He had therefore a good chance to elude the inevitable pursuit. Quickly he edged his way into the open. Then going at once into a side street he turned the first corner he came to and started on the run for the house of Aristarchus.

Who the Roman officer was, he did not need to be told. This could be no other than Marcus the centurion. By an unfortunate chance he had been in Cæsarea when Zatthu was taken before Pilate. He had noted the captive Hebrew well. He remembered him. He would leave no stone unturned to find him and deliver him over to the stern unbending Roman law. It was with no comfortable thoughts that Zatthu hurried on his way, running whenever he could do so without attracting attention, walking rapidly when people were in sight. A Roman soldier was among those whom he passed and this was a meeting that did not please him. Quite out of breath he reached Aristarchus' dwelling, which was a good mile from the synagogue and in the western quarter of the city, and passed inside.

XVII

It was to the room of Aristarchus himself that he directed his steps. In the passageway that led to it he encountered Thisoa.

"I must see your father at once," he said.

"He is asleep and should not be wakened unless it is a matter of importance. But I can see that it is. You are out of breath and your manner is grave and urgent. Can you not tell me what has happened?"

"I have been recognized," he exclaimed. "I am in danger. This house can shelter me no longer. I came to tell your father so and flee at once to my friends. They will hide me."

"No, this is the house that must hide you. It is the one place where they would not seek you."

"You are mistaken. Close by a Roman soldier noted me walking hurriedly. And it was Marcus the centurion who recognized me. He is too keen to omit your father's house from the search."

"Marcus! Of all men, Marcus! That is unfortunate. How is it that he knew you?"

"He sat by Pilate's side when I was tried in Cæsarea."

"Would he had not been there! He is wonderfully astute, but we will baffle him. Come at once with me and I will conceal you."

"No, I must bid your father goodbye and leave your home at once."

"And be taken before you have gone a hundred steps. You shall not do it. It is here that you must hide. Come instantly. We are wasting precious time by talking. Marcus may have fallen in with that soldier and got upon your track."

"Your own words show me that I ought not to stay here.

This house will not be exempt from search as you thought it would. I must see your father at once and then depart."

"That you shall not do. My father must not know that you are hiding here."

"That would be dishonorable."

"Leave that to me. I tell you, you must and shall come with me. If you do not, you will be resisting Jehovah's will. He has appointed me to save you — to save you for your nation's glory and redemption."

The girl drew herself up proudly as she said this. Her manner was imperious; her eyes sparkled with the intensity of her feeling. It flashed upon Zatthu that she was even as Deborah was when she commanded Barak to fight with Jabin. Still, he resisted. Aristarchus had been more than kind to him. He would not reward generosity with deceit. But even while he hesitated, there came so loud a knock upon the door that, far away from it as they were, it was distinctly heard.

"Do you hear?" said Thisoa in a tone that was now imploring. "That is the knock of Rome. It means death to you and ruin for your country if you do not do as I bid you. Come with me! Oh, I beg and entreat you to come with me. It is your Jehovah who is speaking through me. You must not disobey His voice."

Zatthu looked for a moment into the girl's anxious and pleading eyes. He looked only for a moment.

"I believe you," he said with bowed head. "It is Jehovah's call. I must obey it."

Rapidly Thisoa led him to the apartment devoted to her own and her mother's use, in which he had told of his escape from prison at Cæsarea. Opening the door that led from the apartment into the high-walled private garden, she hastily conducted him into it, and to her immense satisfaction she found that Trinion the gardener was at work there. In a low voice she called him. As he hastened to her she said to Zatthu,

“I am going to leave you in the hands of this faithful servant. Do what he bids you and all will be well.”

To Trinion she said,

“You know what to do with this guest of ours, Trinion. Be sure and act with caution and prudence. The honor of my father’s house is to rest on your skill and wisdom for a while.”

Then she hastened into the house again.

XVIII

It was Marcus himself who had knocked at the door of Aristarchus. Hastening from the synagogue without knowing what street the man he was in search of had taken, he directed his steps toward the dwelling of the Greek merchant through an instinct that in critical moments had often guided him aright.

Before long he chanced upon the very soldier who had encountered Zatthu, and what the man said made him sure that it was a well grounded suspicion he had formed.

"It would be just like that generous big-hearted friend of mine to shelter this pestiferous fellow," he thought to himself as he walked along. "He was strangely uncommunicative when I questioned him about that combat with the robbers. He said no such person as I represented Zatthu to be was among the men who attacked him. And no doubt he told the truth for he is always honest. But the fellow may have turned up just in time to help him out of his scrape and then have had friendship and hospitality thrust upon him as a reward. Yes, that would have been just like Aristarchus."

Reaching his friend's house with his suspicions now thoroughly confirmed by his own keen insight and discernment, he had himself taken without ceremony to the Greek's bedside.

"So you have no scruples against sheltering Rome's enemies," he said with a smile as he entered the room.

"None at all. Why should I in a city where Marcus is in command?" was Aristarchus' equally smiling reply. He had just awakened from sleep, but this startling question put his mind instantly on the alert.

"Counting as usual on my friendship and good nature. Well, you made no mistake. I am as sure to be friendly as you are sure to be honest. I make no criticism. But I was with Pilate when Zatthu was tried by him. I recognized him a half

hour since in the synagogue. He has taken refuge here. Rome wants him. You must give him up."

"I never resist Rome. That you know. If he is here, find him and take him away. But I tell you I shall have a sad heart when you carry him off."

"You admit that he is here?"

"No. I admit nothing of the kind. You say, he is here. I say, if he is here, find him."

"You do not really know whether he is here or not?"

"I do not believe that he is here. He went to the synagogue from here. If he came back and entered the house, it was while I was asleep and I did not know of it."

"I believe you; but I am sure he is here and I am going to find him."

"You must do your duty, but I hope he is not here and that you will never find him."

Marcus' smile had vanished. He shook his head sadly as he said,

"Duty bids me do many unpleasant things. To hunt down a brave man in the house of a friend is not to my liking; but it must be done."

Leaving Aristarchus he began his search. The house was surrounded by his men. If the fugitive were within he could not escape. He could proceed with due deliberation.

First of all he went to the aged Paches whose post was at the main door, and asked him if the Hebrew guest of the house had recently come in. But the man admitted he had been asleep and he could not say. The door was not locked. The Hebrew had been in the habit of coming in without announcing himself. He might have done this sometime within the last hour.

Marcus was disappointed. To be sure, he had undertaken this hateful task reluctantly. Having undertaken it, he was too true to Rome to wish to fail in it. He had hoped to get from the door-keeper positive proof that Zatthu was in the

house. But though this proof was so far wanting, he began to search with unabated confidence. He next sent word to Xenodice that he wished to see her.

He waited for her in the atrium. When she appeared he told her why he was there and asked her if she would not tell him plainly whether Zatthu was under her roof.

"I would tell you if I knew, sorry though I should be to do so. But I really do not know."

"What does your daughter know about it?"

"My daughter is a little unwell. She has a headache and is, I think, asleep."

"She has a headache and is asleep," Marcus repeated slowly and with a little suspicion in his mind. "Is it not quite an unusual thing for your daughter to be unwell or to sleep in the middle of the day?"

"I must admit that I cannot remember when either of these things happened before."

"Has she been asleep long, if I may ask such an impertinent question?"

"Not very long. Less than an hour I think."

"I should be sorry to disturb her, but I may have to search your apartments and hers before long. You would not object, I suppose."

"Surely not. But I know you will find nothing there."

Marcus bowed as he replied,

"I will search elsewhere first."

The house being spacious and having many rooms, Marcus posted several men so as to prevent any one from eluding observation by dodging in and out and passing from place to place. Then he went with two soldiers to the servants' quarters in the rear. These he searched thoroughly but with no result. Finding a staircase, he asked where it led.

"To a storeroom under the roof," was the answer.

Marcus mounted the stairway. At the top of it was the storeroom mentioned. A brief inspection showed that no one

was concealed there. The room had a single door connecting it with another chamber. He tried the door. It was locked.

"What is on the other side of that door?" asked Marcus of the steward who had come with him up the stairway.

"A room used by my master's daughter."

"Is it always locked?"

"I think so. I am not sure."

"Who has the key?"

"My mistress or her daughter."

Marcus descended and continued his search. Having visited every part of the house but the rooms occupied by Xenodice and Thisoa and found nothing, he sent for Xenodice again.

"I must now look through your own rooms and those of your daughter," he said.

"You would not be Marcus, if you left anything undone," she answered with a smile. "I will lead the way."

First of all the sitting or living room that opened into the garden was entered. As a glance made it plain that the fugitive was not there, Xenodice opened the door and showed the garden. At the further side of it Trinion was busy watering the flowers. As he heard the door open, he turned, made a low bow and resumed his task. He was old and white-bearded, but his years had not dulled his love for the plants he was caring for. As he passed from one to another he would touch each caressingly and say a word of appreciation as if talking to a child. Marcus eyed him keenly for two or three moments and then turned away. He saw nothing in the garden to awaken his suspicion.

Xenodice's room he inspected very cursorily. At the door of Thisoa's he paused.

"Is your daughter still asleep?" he inquired.

"I will go in and see."

"She seems to be," she reported as she returned a moment later. "But I will wake her if you wish."

"You need not do it now if you will give me your word that no one is concealed there."

Xenodice's face grew crimson.

"Surely," she said, "you do not think my daughter, the daughter of your friend Aristarchus, has hidden a man in her own bedroom!"

"I suspect nothing. As a Roman officer I cannot leave this house till I have made sure that he is not in it. It grieves me to offend you, but duty is a tyrant that disowns courtesy and feeling."

"Yet you trust my word!"

"Because duty tells me it is safe to do so."

Xenodice again entered Thisoa's sleeping room. Very shortly she came out and said,

"I give you my word that my daughter is the only person in the room."

"Then I will not enter it, if I can avoid doing so. But is there not a room above which she uses as her own?"

"There is. In the winter when it is cool she goes there to read or paint or work with her needle."

"How is it reached?"

"By a stairway in a small apartment beyond her own sleeping room."

"And that apartment is entered only through her room?"

"Only through that."

"Then I must go through it, for I have to search that chamber up stairs."

"Might I not make the search for you?"

Marcus hesitated for a moment and then said,

"Your word I would trust implicitly. Still, I should feel better satisfied that I had done my whole duty if I made the search myself. The most honest eyes might not be the most discerning. Please show me the way. I will pass quietly through your daughter's room without disturbing her."

Xenodice conducted him through Thisoa's room into a

smaller one in which was a narrow staircase. Marcus went up the stairs and found himself in a spacious loft that was lighted by one large window and unmistakably furnished for a woman's leisure hours. A small cabinet contained a few rolls of manuscript. On an easel was a half-painted picture that suggested Artemis snatching Iphigenia from her sacrificial doom. The figures were well done but a still better evidence of Thisoa's artistic skill was given by a nearly completed piece of embroidery on a large frame. Here was portrayed with life and spirit a scene which no one could mistake who was familiar with Greek myth. It represented blind *Œdipus* led by his two daughters, *Antigone* and *Ismene*; and the contrast between the resignation of age and the hopefulness of youth was admirably shown.

Only for a moment did Marcus' glance linger on these pieces of handiwork. They interested him, but his innate delicacy forbade him to give a loose rein to curiosity. He was here for a purpose and solely for that. Quickly he satisfied himself that here were no closets in which a man could hide, no furniture behind which he could conceal himself. There was one door in the room — without doubt the one that connected it with the storeroom already searched. He tried it. It was locked.

Going then to the window, he climbed out upon the roof. Its slope was so gradual that he easily made his way round about it. No one was on it but himself. Passing to the edge, he saw his men posted below as he had stationed them and became satisfied that the roof could not have been used as a means of escape without attracting attention.

There was nothing to do but to descend the stairway, and admit that so far his search had failed. But he thought he saw how he might have been foiled.

"Will you please tell me," he said, addressing *Xenodice* whom he found awaiting him near the foot of the stairs, "who has the key to the door of the loft above?"

"It has always, I think, been in my daughter's keeping."

"Then I shall have to ask you to awaken her and tell you where it is."

Xenodice stepped into Thisoa's room. In a moment she came back and announced that the key had been lost.

"Is the storeroom into which the door opens used only by the servants of the house?"

"Oh, no. My daughter and I both have occasion to go to it sometimes."

"Rather an inconvenient key to lose, then," commented Marcus. "I wonder when it was used last. But no matter. As the door above cannot be opened, I find it necessary to look on both sides of it at the same time. So I shall have to make your daughter's room a passageway again while I go and give instructions to Stilco who is waiting in the corridor."

Passing through Thisoa's room but not glancing at the bed to see whether she was really awake or had dropped into slumber again, Marcus found Stilco and told him to go again by the stairway in the servants' quarters into the storeroom. If he found nothing there, he was to rap thrice on the door of the room. He then passed back into the small apartment, climbed the narrow stairs once more and waited. Presently he heard the triple knock. It seemed well established that the fugitive was nowhere in the house.

Marcus went down the stairway into the little apartment where again he found the wife of Aristarchus. He was puzzled. Bootless though his search had been, he was by no means convinced that the elusive Hebrew was not hidden somewhere under that very roof. Thisoa's headache and the lost key both seemed suspicious to him. He wanted to think.

What is it that makes the body seek support when the mind is to be busy? Or is it the mind itself that dominates the body and bids it relieve itself of all possible strain in order that the brain may be the sole centre of energy? Whatever the cause is, a man who would ponder likes to sit. Charged

with vitality as Marcus was, powerful as few men are, he looked around for a seat as he reached the foot of the stairway. A chair was empty. He took it, merely shaking his head as he looked at Xenodice and thus indicating that his efforts had failed.

For a few moments he pondered in silence. Then he suddenly said to Xenodice,

"Who was that old man I saw in the garden? I can't remember that I ever set eyes on him before."

"His name is Trinion. His care is the small garden you saw and the larger one in the rear of the house."

"Has he been with you long?"

"Oh, yes, ten years at least."

"He seemed to be a quaint character. May I see him?"

"Assuredly. I will send for him."

Marcus and Xenodice went now to the living room. Trinion was still in the little garden and he came in at once at Xenodice's summons. He was past seventy, but his eye was bright and his mind vigorous. To Marcus's questions he gave ready and sometimes amusing answers; but upon the whereabouts of the fugitive he could shed no light.

"You are not a magician, I suppose, and you cannot hide a man behind a rose bush?" asked Marcus, half jestingly.

"Not if he were as big as you are," was the quick reply.

"But suppose he was very small?" There was a twinkle in the old man's eye as he answered,

"Then I could do it if those that hunted him were blind."

Marcus laughed as he said,

"You can go, Trinion. You are a real gardener and not a runaway in disguise, and that was what I wanted to see."

Then turning to Xenodice, he added,

"I shall have to go into the servants' quarters again and inspect every one there. And I fear I must ask you to accompany me and see that all your household is brought under survey."

Xenodice went with Marcus. Every servant but Trinion was produced and closely viewed, but no one of them was other than a genuine retainer of the house.

“I looked at them all sharply the first time,” said Marcus as he finished his survey, but I thought it well to examine them once more in your presence and make absolutely sure that no one of them was the man I am looking for, masking as a servant. It only remains for me to thank you with all my heart for your patience and your generous assistance — an assistance which I can well understand you did not enjoy giving — and to give up the search. I am now going to Aristarchus to acknowledge my defeat.”

XIX

To Aristarchus Marcus went, while Xenodice hastened at once to her daughter's room.

"Has your headache left you, Thisoa?" she asked as she entered with a very light step.

"Come close to me, mother, and I will tell you," was the low reply.

Xenodice went to the bedside and seated herself on the edge of the bed. Thisoa drew her mother down to her and whispered in her ear,

"Has Marcus gone?"

"Yes. That is, he is now with your father."

"You are sure he is not within hearing?"

"Quite sure."

"And none of the soldiers are lurking where they could hear?"

"They have all left the house."

"Then my headache is gone."

Startled at this curious communication, Xenodice sat upright, looked at Thisoa intently and said,

"What do you mean, child? What strange thing have you been doing?"

"I have been hiding Zatthu."

"Hiding our Hebrew guest? Impossible. Where?"

"Don't be dismayed, mother. He is not under the bed."

"But where is he? How could you hide him from such keen eyes as those of Marcus?"

"In a hole in the garden; right behind a clump of rose bushes."

"Rose bushes! Rose bushes! Why, Marcus asked Trinion if he was magician enough to hide a man behind a rose bush. He had hit upon the very hiding place and did not know it."

"Yes, and I can imagine how Trinion was laughing to himself when he answered the question."

"I noticed a merry twinkle in his eye. But how did you ever think of such a thing, and how did you ever dare to do it?"

"I have been afraid that Zatthu would be recognized and be in danger of his life. I have been haunted by the thought ever since he told us of his escape from prison. So I made up my mind we must be prepared to save him.

"I got Trinion to dig a deep hole behind a thick clump of rose bushes — deep enough for a man to stand in and not be seen. And right here Trinion set up a box, a kind of trough for holding water to water the flowers with. He made it out of old pieces of wood so that it would not appear new and rouse suspicion; and he made it look so solid that one couldn't think of it as easily moved. It was big enough to cover the hole and right over the hole he was to place it if the hole had to be used as a hiding place.

"Now as soon as I heard that vigorous knock at the door and knew that Rome — and by Rome I really mean Marcus — was on Zatthu's track, I hurried our guest into the garden and handed him over to Trinion. What Trinion did, doesn't need to be told. He helped Zatthu get down into the hole. Then he moved the wooden trough over him so as to hide him completely, though of course he saw to it that there was air enough for him to breathe freely. I cautioned him about that."

"I have no doubt you did. You seem to have planned it all as carefully as a general plans a campaign. But I hope the trough is water tight so that our guest will not get drenched."

"He won't even be damp. The trough was thoroughly made. Its seams were all smeared with pitch. It doesn't leak a drop. But dear me! Suppose it did? A wetting is a small

price to pay for your life. But tell me; did Marcus make any search through the garden at all?"

"No. A glance was enough to show him there was nothing there big enough to hide a man. That hole beneath the trough of course he did not suspect."

"I have tricked Marcus! I have tricked Marcus!" exclaimed Thisoa, not loudly through fear of being overheard, but with manifest delight. "And he is the cleverest Roman in all Palestine."

"And the most generous, or you couldn't be so merry over what you have done."

"True. I believe he is as just and generous a man as lives. But his cause is bad when he has to hunt down a patriot like Zattu, and in his heart I am sure he is at this moment glad that he has failed."

"It would be unlike him not to be so. But why did you plead a headache and take to your bed? And how about that key? Is it really lost?"

"One question at a time, dear mother. This was a play with several acts and each one had to be perfectly planned and carried through. I took to my bed because I did not want to have Marcus fix those keen eyes of his on mine and try to read what was in my mind. And I was sure he would see something suspicious in the very fact that a healthy girl like me had gone to bed in the middle of the day. This would fix his mind on what was going on right here, in and about my room, and take it away from the garden. To make his suspicions centre altogether on this part of the house, I ran upstairs and locked the door that opens into the storeroom; and when you made the inquiry that I knew was sure to come, I said the key had been lost. Oh, how I wished I could see his face when you told him that! Didn't he frown and look the very image of suspicion?"

"I cannot deny that he did. I must admit, too, that you have played your part very cleverly and hoodwinked a re-

markedly astute and discerning man. But I am sorry it had to be. Such a warm friend of your father's as he is. It hardly seems right and honest."

"It isn't honest, dear mother, and that is what makes it right, yes, beautifully right."

"Don't talk so wildly, Thisoa. Deceit is a vile thing even though enlisted in a good cause."

"Mother," answered Thisoa very gravely, "I am not talking wildly. If I have been in a merry mood it is only the rebound from the hour of awful anxiety I have passed through. This Hebrew whose life we have saved is a very noble man. If he had been found here almost under our very roof and led away to his death—I believe I should never have been happy again. Do not look at me so fixedly. My heart is my own—at any rate, I think it is. But this man has a greater soul than any I have known. He is called to do mighty things. The God of his people is calling him. To have saved him for his great and wonderful destiny is a thing to be proud of. Deceit! Why I would tell a thousand lies to save him and glory in it! When I found an hour ago that he was in danger, I believed I was chosen by his Jehovah to deliver him. I told him so. He too believed it and he put himself in my hands. It was well. I have saved him, and to the great power that made us all, whatever be its name, I render up my thanks that I, a weak maid, should have been chosen to do this wondrous service."

As she said these last words the girl stretched forth her arms and raised her eyes heavenward with a rapt look upon her face.

Her exalted mood found a response in Xenodice. She too was deeply interested in Zatthu and his success. Much as she regretted that circumstances had forced one in her own household to thwart and deceive a close family friend, she could not feel sorry that it had been done. Indeed, she could not but rejoice, and fervently rejoice, that the noble Hebrew

guest had for the moment escaped capture. Kissing Thisoa tenderly she said,

“It is a good deed that you have done. Perhaps it was the God of the Hebrews that called you to do it. But its consequences are upon us. We have this guest of ours still to protect and hide. How shall we do it?”

“For one thing, we must not let father know anything about it.”

“Why not?”

“He is too honest. He would not know how to hide the truth from Marcus. He ought not to have to do so. It might compromise him and hurt his friendship with Marcus to act as an enemy to Rome.”

“I fear it would, yet I do not know how to keep him in ignorance of what has happened. I have never yet deceived him. It seems simply impossible to begin.”

“Find a way, mother dear. Think hard, for this is a matter of life and death.”

“Leave it all to me,” Xenodice answered after a little thought. “I see what course I must take and I will go to your father as soon as I am sure Marcus has left the house. But what are we to do with Zatthu?”

“Feed him,” said Thisoa, her high spirits again becoming manifest. “The poor man must be starving in that hole behind the rose bushes. Trinion must take him something to eat. But we must make absolutely sure that Marcus has left the house before we stir a step. He is just shrewd enough to come back here suddenly to see if he could not catch us in some trickery.”

“And when he has really gone, what then?”

“I think our guest will have to keep to his room pretty closely and Nikon must contrive a hiding place for him — a space under the floor of his own room or some nook he can creep into so as never to be found. That hole in the garden really isn’t a very good place. The idea came into my head

the other day when I was tending the flowers with Trinion, and I had him dig the hole and carry away the earth, little thinking it would soon be put to use. We must not trust to it again. But do call Thermion and let her find whether Marcus has gone. I shan't feel easy till I know he is out of the house."

The maid Thermion soon brought word that the centurion had left. So Nikon was summoned and told to relieve Zatthu from his uncomfortable hiding-place, while Xenodice, not in a wholly satisfied and joyous mood, went to her husband.

XX

She found Aristarchus in a troubled state of mind. The search over, Marcus had come to him good-naturedly, had laughed over his failure and shown no resentment because an enemy of Rome had been sheltered and perhaps even at that very moment artfully concealed under his friend's roof. But because he had acted generously he asked that he be met in the same spirit. He wanted Aristarchus to tell him how he first ran across Zatthu and why he had befriended him. He was also very desirous of learning how the Hebrew insurrection maker had escaped from the prison at Cæsarea. For he was sure the story of this strange feat had been told to Aristarchus.

All this information the kindly and loyal Greek had courteously but firmly refused to give. He realized in an instant that he could not give it without mentioning Kelita and Shobek and bringing them into dire peril. So, much against his will, he had to withhold from a Roman officer knowledge he was legally bound to give. Not without mortification he saw he had been shortsighted. He had been drawn into a very compromising situation by pressing hospitality upon the man to whom he was deeply indebted. He would have done more wisely to bring Zatthu under his roof for an hour only, establish the relation of friendship with him and then let him go and find shelter with his own people. But it was such a strange chance that Marcus had seen Zatthu at Cæsarea! How provoking that Fortune should have played him such a trick! Was she really a divinity, as the Greeks and Romans believed, and did she take delight in tripping up too trusting mortals by her outrageous tricks?

"Marcus," he said, after thinking over his disagreeable plight, "I cannot answer your questions; honor forbids. And if you, a Roman officer before you are a friend, should arrest

me and make me pay the penalty for refusing to tell you what you have a right to ask, you would only be doing your duty. But bear in mind that I have drifted into this painful position merely through showing gratitude to a man who did me a great service — saved my life, in fact, for that much it is right that you should know. All my life I have been law-abiding and have respected Rome's authority under which I have prospered. Possibly it would be to Rome's interest to keep me as a friend, for I might sometime be able to show her that I was really a friend worth having. Nations as well as individuals may profit by being generous."

"I shall not arrest you," was Marcus' ready answer. "Rome will, I am satisfied, do well to keep you as a friend. Moreover, this man cannot long escape us. Even if he should, I believe him powerless to do harm. He is misguided and is looking for help from above which I, a convert to his faith, do not believe he will ever get. But in spite of the thoroughness of my search, I am not sure that he is not at this very moment hidden somewhere in this house, and I shall therefore place a cordon of soldiers around it. So I warn you not to do anything which might make you openly and undeniably a conspirator against Rome and really force me to place you under arrest.

"And now, farewell. May your perplexity not keep your wound from healing."

Reading her husband's disturbed state of mind the moment she saw him, Xenodice let him speak before she said aught herself. When he had told her what had passed between himself and Marcus, she merely inquired,

"How is your hurt, my dear husband?"

A little surprised that his narration seemed to arouse no interest, he answered carelessly,

"Oh, much better, I think. My mind isn't upon it in the least. I have, as you can see, things vastly more important to occupy it."

"There, I am convinced, you are very much mistaken," was the quiet answer. "You are still very much of an invalid. Everything that might cause mental excitement and unrest would seriously retard your recovery. I am going to be a very strict physician for a while and keep you in utter ignorance of what is going on about you. You yourself, I am sure, will see the wisdom of this and ask no questions either of me or of Thisoa."

Aristarchus looked at his wife very searchingly. There was no suspicion in his eye, not the smallest trace of resentment. It was with a curiosity that grew into mingled admiration and amusement that he studied the noble face with its expression of deep tranquillity. Tranquil as it was, he was not slow to read its meaning. Here was a prudence he had never known to fail, a devotion no power on earth could cause to falter. That audacious and resourceful daughter of his was carrying through some deep-laid scheme which had found the mother's sanction. Yes, he could see it might be best for him to be an invalid too weak to know what was passing under his roof.

"You are probably right," he soon answered. "You are always right. I can always trust your judgment. Manage the affairs of the house for a while; and perhaps you will think it best to let very few persons see me. I shall not think it strange if our Hebrew guest does not visit me for the present: and possibly I might be sleeping if Marcus should come again soon."

The faintest suspicion of a smile showed in Xenodice's face as she looked gratefully at her husband, passed her hand caressingly over his brow and said,

"You are as discerning as you are generous. It is good of you to trust me, and I will try not to abuse the trust. But what strange paths we sometimes have to tread through no choice of our own! Here are you and I not sharing our thoughts wholly for the first time in all these happy gracious years. Well, my dear husband, it will not be for long."

XXI

It was not a comfortable hiding place to which Zatthu had been consigned. The hole was just large enough to admit him. Still he was distressed neither in body nor in mind while he was imprisoned in it. For he was too tense to think of his physical well-being, and too trustful to be nervous or alarmed. That this spirited Greek maiden had been appointed by Jehovah to save him, he fully believed. Hence, when he dimly heard the door of the living room open and was sure that the Roman centurion was inspecting the garden, he felt no fear.

Not at all surprised was he therefore when he heard Trinion telling him in a low voice that the immediate danger had passed; that Marcus had looked the garden over without suspicion and had gone back into the house; but that he would have to remain where he was till the search was wholly given up.

Tranquilly he waited and it was not till the middle of the afternoon that Trinion moved the trough away and helped him out of his narrow prison. Entering the living room he found Xenodice and Thisoa there and they arranged with him a plan of action.

Escape was not easy, the house being under surveillance. The only way to effect it seemed to be through Kelita and Shobek. They would dare anything in his behalf. It was necessary to communicate with them.

How was this to be done when the house was so closely guarded? The members of the family would be allowed to go where they pleased, but beyond question they would be noted and followed. But after careful consultation a method of procedure was determined upon, and the following day a well matured attempt was made to act upon it.

Among the servants of Aristarchus was a shrewd and quick-

witted boy of fifteen, Akkub by name, whose parents belonged to the poorer Hebrews of Capernaum. Left largely to himself from early childhood, he had acquired independence and keenness of perception in manifold ways. By consorting with other urchins of like circumstance he had learned the youthful vagabond's art of reading character. On the lake shore he had listened to the talk of hard-headed fishermen. Frequenting stalls and booths, he had become familiar with the astute ways of the oriental trader. When therefore he took service with Aristarchus at fifteen, he had the crafty and discerning mind which is only gained in the school of experience.

Yet the experience had not made Akkub either hard or treacherous while it had been making him clever. Aristarchus had treated him kindly and had inspired in him a loyal affection. He could be trusted to do for his master any task that called for intelligence and fidelity. And if the task was to serve one of his own race, it would be sure to kindle an added zeal. Akkub was a stout little patriot and ardently hated the Romans.

The morning after the search Akkub was summoned to the living room. There Xenodice and Thisoa acquainted him with Zatthu's peril. His black eyes flashed as he heard the story, and no words were needed to show his sympathy and his desire to be of service. Quite overjoyed with the mission that was entrusted to him, he listened carefully to all the instructions that were given him, and with a light heart and a confident step he started forth on his errand.

Hardly was he outside of the house when he began to play antics. Exceedingly strong and agile, he had almost as full a mastery of his body as a performing acrobat. Soldiers were posted all around. Running rapidly toward the nearest he turned a somersault in the air just in front of him, landed on his feet and held out his hand for a coin. The soldier laughed but shook his head.

"You are too well paid to get anything from me," said he. "But where did you learn to do that?"

"Some Arabs that did such things were here once. One of them taught me. Don't the Roman soldiers have to do like things in camp?"

"Roman soldiers are taught how to fight, not to act like monkeys. But what else can you do?"

By way of answer Akkub clambered up the soldier with marvellous ease and dexterity and stood with his feet perched on the man's shoulders. Then, steadying himself by placing one hand on the securely fastened helmet, he said,

"Now stand perfectly still and I will show you something else."

"How can you show me anything, you knave, when you are up where I can't see you? Come down and quit your fooling. You are making me a laughing stock."

The soldiers posted near were indeed laughing, though the rigid Roman discipline did not permit them to gather around. The man on whose shoulders Akkub had planted himself happened to be a decurion, and those under him were amused to see his dignity thus lightly treated. But his threat did not in the least disconcert the Hebrew boy. With airy effrontery he answered,

"I am sure you wouldn't want to disappoint your fellow soldiers by having me come down without doing what I climbed up here for. So just keep perfectly still for a moment."

With that he attempted to reverse the order of nature by standing with his feet in the air and his hands on the soldier's helmet. But this pressed the helmet down so hard upon the decurion's head that he became truly incensed and lurched forward to shake off this vexing encumbrance. It was however exactly the movement that Akkub was expecting. Being prepared for it, he landed on his feet, looked reproachfully at the decurion and said,

"How can I do my tricks if you don't help me out?"

"By Pollux, I'll help you out with a thrashing," shouted the decurion. And then overcome by the comic gravity of Akkub's face, he began to laugh and said good-naturedly, "But you are a droll knave, though. It really isn't worth while to get angry with you. But no more monkey tricks. Marcus the centurion would have taken my rank away from me if he had seen you perched on my shoulders. What are you out here for, anyway?"

"They sent me on an errand."

"Who are 'they'?"

"My master's wife."

"What's the errand?"

"To go to the physician, Malluch, and ask him for some medicine. My master didn't sleep well last night."

"No wonder. He knew he'd been playing Rome a nasty trick and Rome doesn't forget such things. But you're a pretty sort of messenger — acting like a monkey instead of hurrying off to serve your sick master."

Akkub looked sheepish and said meekly,

"When I get to performing, I can never think of anything else."

"Well, you ought to have a good thrashing to make you remember better. But go on your way now, only one of my men must go with you to see you don't stir up any mischief. Those are the orders. And if that physician wants to come into the house, he will have to get a special permit from the centurion. Those are the orders too."

This said, he beckoned to one of the soldiers and when the man drew near he sent Akkub out of hearing and said,

"Nævius, go with this young imp to the house of Malluch the physician. Watch him closely when you arrive there and see whether he hands over any paper. If he does, seize it and go to the centurion with it, taking the boy with you. If no paper is delivered, bring the rascal back here as soon as he

has done his errand. Mind you keep a sharp watch on him all the time, though I think he is harmless. His mind is on the pranks he can play and not on his master's service."

Having largely disarmed suspicion by his tactics, Akkub proceed to disarm it more completely as he and Nævius went on their way together. Seemingly through pure exuberance of spirit he cut up capers unceasingly. He turned hand-springs; persons they met he mocked behind their backs; he begged for alms; he exercised the boy's ancient prerogative of throwing stones. So by the time they reached the house of Malluch the physician, he had thoroughly convinced Nævius that he was a harum-scarum ragamuffin, as little likely to be used for a deep-laid scheme as would a bird of the air.

Still, the trained Roman soldier did keep an eye on him when they stood in the presence of Malluch. His reason for accompanying Akkub he briefly explained to the physician without putting him too much on his guard. Aristarchus was suspected of harboring an enemy of Rome. So all who went from his house had to be watched and their movements noted carefully. But the errand of this Hebrew boy seemed a proper one to which the centurion, well known to be a friend of Aristarchus, would certainly not object.

Nævius was shrewd enough to make no mention of a possible paper. He was not shrewd enough to keep his eye every instant on the supposedly guileless Hebrew boy. Even while he was speaking, Akkub winked so hard at Malluch as to show him that his errand had an ulterior end. He also placed himself a little back of Nævius just long enough to flash upon the eye of the physician a paper which he had as quickly concealed again in his garment. But the sight was enough. Malluch, keen and alert as ever in spite of his white hair, understood that in the few moments that followed he was to be the boy's active confederate and coadjutor.

Briefly Akkub confirmed what Nævius had said about his errand. Aristarchus, his master, had not had a very good

night. He wished something that would make him sleep, but the physician did not need to go to the house. The medicine sent with Akkub would be enough.

This said, Akkub proceeded to stand on his head and walk about the room on his hands. Nævius looked at him and then at Malluch. He was a little puzzled. Would this dignified and venerable man allow such levity to go unrebuked?

With a smile the old Hebrew answered his querying glance and said,

“Don’t mind that impudent, mischievous boy. I know him of old. As soon expect fishes to fly and birds to burrow as that young rascal to behave himself. Just look at this Roman coin a friend of mine found in Egypt. It’s well worn, isn’t it? Perhaps your great Julius Cæsar handled it once.”

Nævius examined the coin just long enough to let Akkub do what he wanted. Still walking on his hands he got behind the unsuspecting Roman, balanced himself for a moment on one hand and with the other thrust the paper under a roll of manuscript lying on a table close by. Then he continued his brachiapedic gyration till he was directly in front of Nævius. There with an agile spring, he landed on his feet.

None of his movements had escaped the eye of Malluch. Still, the crafty old Hebrew seemed all the time to be busy at a cabinet of olive wood in which he kept his drugs and simples. From these he prepared the remedy needed by Aristarchus, pausing now and then to address a remark to the Roman. The medicine ready, he gave it to Akkub, and the Hebrew boy and his custodian went on their way. Hardly had they left the house ere Malluch possessed himself of the secreted paper and eagerly perused the full instructions therein given. He knew of Zatthu. The fire of patriotism burned strongly in him. The directions were no sooner read than they were carried out to the letter.

Elated by his success in hoodwinking Nævius, Akkub indulged in wilder antics than ever on the way back to the dwell-

ing of Aristarchus. Arriving there, he was too cunning to hasten inside at once, much as he longed to do so and make known the success of his mission. Again he attempted to entertain the decurion with acrobatic feats. Again the half-amused and half-irate officer told him to stop, as such antics were unbecoming. So with a grimace as if he felt that his efforts were unappreciated, he went slowly and seemingly with reluctance into the house. There he was met at once by Xenodice and Thisoa, who rejoiced not a little to learn that the all-important missive had reached its destination. Eagerly they waited the assurance that was to be given them at midday if their plan promised success.

Not only eagerly but confidently they awaited the issue; for it really seemed as if Akkub had performed his task with cleverness and skill. That this was so could hardly be denied. None the less it was largely through good fortune that everything finally went well. Akkub had over-acted his part. Had Marcus known of his antics he would have been suspicious. He would have been sure that mischief was on foot and would have doubled the guard around Aristarchus' house—the very thing Xenodice and Thisoa were plotting to prevent. It was easy enough to get word to Zatthu's friends. Either Xenodice or Thisoa could have gone whither she pleased, unmolested. But the movements of either of them would have been carefully noted and communication with those who could help Zatthu to freedom would have been discovered and would have caused extra precautions to be taken to prevent his escape.

Akkub was chosen because it was thought he could be the intermediary without making the Romans extraordinarily watchful. And so it proved, for the reason that Luscus, the decurion, was by no means an astute man. When Nævius came back from Malluch's with Akkub, the decurion asked him to tell all that had happened. Nævius' reply was brief. The Hebrew lad had asked Malluch for medicine, had received

it and brought it away. Had no paper been passed? No, none.

Luscus was satisfied. He considered the boy an empty-headed scamp, too playful to be trusted with any matter of importance. Accordingly, when Marcus came to the house a little before midday and got the decurion's report, Nævius told of the errand to Malluch but he quite omitted Akkub's remarkable feats of agility from his account. Assured that no paper had been handed to Malluch, Marcus saw nothing suspicious in the errand and proceeded to the house to inquire after Aristarchus. At the door he was told that the Greek was asleep and could not be disturbed. Was Xenodice well? Quite so. And her daughter? His young mistress, the door-keeper said, had recovered from her slight illness of the day before. At this intelligence Marcus smiled grimly, but went away without asking further questions.

Could he have watched Xenodice and Thisoa and noted what they saw, he would certainly have doubled the guard around the dwelling before the sun went down. For just at midday Xenodice and Thisoa posted themselves where they could observe the nearest house, the inmates of which were Hebrews. Expectantly they kept their eyes upon it, and they had not long to wait. A little after midday a veiled woman appeared upon the housetop and slowly turned herself about three times.

"She has followed the course of the sun," murmured Xenodice, "and all will be well. Kelita and Shobeck have got the message and the rescue will be made tonight."

For the veiled woman was the only daughter of Malluch and the instructions given in the paper craftily placed by Akkub had been followed to the letter.

XXII

That Marcus wished to treat the household of Aristarchus with all possible respect he had clearly shown. A sudden renewal of the search for the Hebrew fugitive was hardly to be expected. Still, his plight was too desperate to allow the smallest risk to be taken. The slowly dragging hours in which he waited for deliverance he spent in Nicon's room. In case of alarm he could instantly conceal himself there behind a partition which Nicon, who had a good degree of mechanical skill, had artfully made to appear solid and substantial.

It was here that Zatthu got word of the seeming success of Xenodice's efforts in his behalf and of the attempt his friends would surely make to rescue him in the course of the coming night. That this was proof of Jehovah's approval and protection he devoutly believed; and dark though his immediate prospects were, he was full of hope and courage. He was an outlaw. Rome was hunting him. If captured he would be summarily put to death. And how could a fugitive from justice cause a rising in Galilee that would even shake the deep-bedded rock of Roman sovereignty? The task seemed an impossible one; but was it more so than that of Moses?

The one thing needed was faith. This he had told his people again and again. He must not himself be wanting in it in this hour of trial. He was not wanting in it. He was thrilled with a sense of Jehovah's omnipotence. What were Rome and the legions of Rome before it? As he thought how whole armies might melt at the breath of God's displeasure, he cried out in the words of Jeremiah,

"I will make thee unto this people a fenced brazen wall; and they shall not prevail against thee; for I am with thee to save thee and to deliver thee, saith the Lord."

In the early evening he sent word through Nicon that he

wished to see Xenodice and Thisoa. The message was gladly received. They too were desirous of a last word with him before he left the house with the sword still hanging over his head. Nikon ushered him into their receiving room. It was into grave and sober faces that he looked as he entered it, but his own countenance was illumined by his exalted mood and his eyes were bright with more than their wonted fire.

"I am so rejoiced to see that you are not cast down by the dangers that surround you," said Xenodice as she went quickly forward to meet him. "You are indeed brave to keep so confident a spirit in the midst of these dire alarms."

"My confidence is not my own," was the reply. "It is given me by the God of my people. Why should I doubt? Why should I fear? He who walked with his three faithful servants in the fiery furnace can deliver me from a few hostile swords."

"And He will! He will! cried Thisoa, with clasped hands uplifted as if in appeal to the Power in whom Zatthu trusted. "This night you shall be free and laugh at your enemies."

There was a softer light in Zatthu's eye as he looked at the spirited girl and was touched by her noble enthusiasm. It was as if the spiritual fire that burned in his soul caught the glow of pure human feeling. How strangely God was leading him! What unlooked for instruments He was raising up to save him from destruction! In that moment of supremest peril when the hand of Rome had almost been laid upon him, it was not the armed men of Israel that had preserved him. It was a maid who was not of his own people and who had had no weapon but her own quickwittedness. And even at this very moment when he was waiting for his chosen comrades to compass his deliverance, he was shielded by an alien household and its trusty servants. Verily, here was a lesson he must read in all humbleness. Through all the days Jehovah allotted to him, he must be careful not to spurn any instru-

ments, however seemingly untoward, that might be put into his hands.

"Yes," he said, "I shall soon be free. I shall soon be far from Capernaum among the Galilean hills. And it is to you that I shall owe my freedom."

"No, not to us," replied Xenodice. "To the brave men who who will soon strike the blow that will give you your freedom."

"Ah, but what could Shobek and Kelita do, what would they have had the chance to do, if this house had not stood between me and death? May Jehovah shower his richest mercies upon you for your generous kindness to a stranger. Your husband," he went on, looking at Xenodice, "has prospered. It is because he is a righteous man. Jehovah will make him prosper to the end of his days."

"My husband is a righteous man," said Xenodice proudly. "No one of your favored nation was ever more upright than he."

"No, not one," added Zatthu solemnly. "He could have said with our great Samuel: 'Whom have I defrauded? Whom have I oppressed? Or of whose hand have I received any bribe?' It grieves me sorely that his generosity to me has brought him into trouble. It grieves me too that you are forced to keep him in ignorance of the shelter and protection you have given me. You are sure he will not be offended with you both?"

"We are as sure," said Thisoa with a merry laugh which burst upon their solemn gravity like a gleam of sunshine, "as we are that the moon is round or that a dog will growl if you take away his bone. Why, it is going to be the happiest hour I have ever had when I tell him how I hid you in the garden and outwitted Marcus."

"And his friend the centurion will bear no grudge against him?"

"For the pranks his wife and daughter played while he was

taking a nap? How absurd that would be! As well blame a mole for being blind or a cat for having a tail!"

Thisoa had such an arch and roguish look as she said this that Zaththu could but smile. Just for an instant the wrongs of Judæa and his own grave peril seemed far away. He could but look admiringly into the bright mirthful eyes and feel that never did lips curve into such a bewitching smile. But it was only for an instant. Too solemn was his mood, too deep his sense that Jehovah's voice had called him as with a trumpet to allow an earthborn sentiment to linger in his heart. Quickly the smile vanished and he was once more the man dominated solely by a sublime heroic purpose as he answered,

"Glad I am to hear it, and glad too to see good in this Roman who would bring about my death. I bear him no ill will. He has but done his duty. But let Aristarchus know how much I honor him, how sorry I am to have given such a poor return for his hospitality, and how deeply I regret that I could not see him to say farewell."

"He shall be told," answered Xenodice. "He will remember you most kindly, as my daughter and I shall also. Friendly to Rome as we have always been and have reason to be, we cannot help wishing that your cause may triumph. Rome could still be great though Judæa should be free."

"And Judæa shall be free," cried Thisoa, whose eyes no longer sparkled with merriment but flashed with the fire of an ardent sympathy. "She shall be free and you shall free her. Your Jehovah is with you. He has raised you up to do things as great as your Moses and all your mighty men of old. When generations have passed the mothers of Israel will bless you because their babes can breathe the air of freedom. Go forth! Go forth and conquer! This house will always be proud that it sheltered one of Judæa's noblest sons."

Thisoa stretched forth her hands as she said these words with face raised heavenward. Thrilled by her fervor and even awed by it, Zaththu stood transfixed for a moment and his

thoughts went back to the great things in his nation's past. Almost could he believe that he stood in the presence of a Deborah who had been inspired to give him heaven's own sanction. Reverently he bowed his head as he answered,

"Amen to your words of cheer and benediction. Sure am I that if my own people give me the trust and sympathy I have found in this generous mansion, I cannot fail. May Jehovah bless you all for your noble faith in one who but a few days since was altogether a stranger. And now I will go and await what the night will bring forth. But let us keep a stout heart in the meantime. All will certainly go well."

Zatthu now stationed himself just within the main entrance to the dwelling, ready to issue forth instantly when the right moment came. With him was the trusty Nikon to speed his movements. Calm, but with anxious hearts, Xenodice and Thisoa remained in their own receiving room for a while; but toward midnight Xenodice went to her husband's bedside. The time had nearly come for Aristarchus to be told of what had passed beneath his very roof and what even then was passing.

Just at midnight the time came. Of a sudden loud shouts were heard that seemed to come from the rear of the dwelling. They woke Aristarchus from his slumber and but for Xenodice's staying hand he would have started up in bed, forgetful of his wound; for startling was the din, and cries of "Rescue! Rescue! Rescue for Zatthu!" could be plainly heard.

"Be quiet, my dear husband," said Xenodice calmly. "There is no occasion for alarm."

"But what does it all mean?"

"It means that Zatthu has been hidden here since he came from the synagogue yesterday, and his friends are now effecting his escape."

"He was hidden here all the time and Marcus did not find him?"

“Even so.”

“How I shall laugh at my good friend the centurion over that!”

But the smile upon his face gave way to a troubled expression as the tumult increased, the shouting grew still louder, and the clash of arms was heard.

“I am glad he was not found,” he went on, “but this sound of fighting distresses me sorely. It means bloodshed. It means that Roman soldiers will be hurt or killed because my house has sheltered a man condemned by Pontius Pilate. Marcus is generous but he can hardly condone such violence as that.”

“Do not be troubled. There will be no bloodshed. Our Hebrew guest is a man of honor and I think he would rather have gone to his death than have embroiled you with Rome or broken your friendship with Marcus. He saw that if any of the soldiers on guard here were killed, you would be held accountable for their death. His plans were therefore laid carefully to avoid any such happening. His two friends, Kelita and Shobek, have been strictly charged to refrain from taking life and to avoid violence so far as possible. Kelita with a numerous band was to raise a commotion in the rear of the house which would be sure to draw there nearly all of the force that is stationed round the house. Even the sentries specially enjoined to watch all the exits would have their attention absorbed by the assault that was apparently being made. But the assault was only to be a feigned one, and during the din and tumult Shobek and two other powerful men were to steal upon the soldier guarding the main door and overpower him. Then three raps upon the door would give the signal to Zatthu who has for sometime been waiting there with Nikon. As soon as the raps were given Zatthu was to dart forth into the night and flee to the hills with Shobek, where Kelita would find them if he did not succeed in joining them in the dark.

“Such was the plan. That it has already been carried out successfully, I have no doubt. Hark! Do you not see that the shouting is growing fainter, is subsiding altogether? And listen again! Do you not hear that Halleluiah twice repeated? That was to be the signal to us here that everything had gone as we had hoped and that Zatthu was on his way to liberty.”

“Yes, he is on his way to liberty,” said Thisoa who came in with a beaming face. “He will soon be in the Galilean hills where Rome will never find him — and father, aren’t you glad and thankful in your heart of hearts?”

“Yes,” replied Aristarchus drily. “I cannot help being glad. But the extent of my gladness depends upon the number of Roman corpses lying round my house.”

PART III

THISOA

I

“What makes you so sad, Thisoa?”

“Do I seem sad?”

“Indeed you do. I almost feel as if I ought to go home and play with my doll Rachel. She is real good company and I have such nice times playing with her.”

“Twelve years old and still fond of your doll! Well, I’m glad that it is so. Be a child as long as you can, my dear little Naomi. When you are a woman, there will be times perhaps when you will wish you could forget all your troubles by having a good cry or playing with your doll.”

“Have you any troubles, dear Thisoa?”

“To be sure I have. Every woman has troubles. She wouldn’t be a woman if she didn’t.”

“Won’t you tell me about them?”

“No, dear child. You wouldn’t understand. But I don’t want you to go away. I love to have you near me and it was naughty of me to look sad. I won’t do so any more and I want you to tell me how you play with your doll Rachel. How came you to call her that?”

“Because I liked it. Don’t you think it’s a pretty name?”

“Very pretty. But who was Rachel?”

“Why, don’t you know who Rachel was? Oh, I forgot. You are not of our people. Well, Rachel was the wife of Jacob — that is, she was one of his wives. He had another named Leah. I didn’t know that a man needed more than one. Father has only one, so I asked mother once if he was going to get another. But she said I wasn’t old enough to understand about such things. I don’t believe she’d like it a bit to see another around. Do you?”

“I am sure she wouldn’t. But tell me about Rachel and the little plays you have with her. I don’t believe my doll was half as nice as she.”

"I'm sure she wasn't any nicer. I just love Rachel. You see, mother has taught me how she could be a good many different persons — not all at once, you know. She's very, very clever, but she couldn't do that. But sometimes she is Pharaoh's daughter finding little Moses in the rushes. I think I like best for her to be that, for then she takes up Moses — he's a tiny little thing that mother made for me out of a bit of old linen — and she loves him very dearly. Then sometimes she is Miriam leading the women who had just come through the Red Sea in the dance. Sometimes she is Queen Esther. She likes that. It makes her very proud to be a queen. And once in a while I have her be Jephthah's daughter. She doesn't enjoy that very much, though. You know she has to be killed, and after she's dead I have to have Elijah the prophet come and bring her to life again. Mother says he couldn't have done it, for he wasn't born then. But somebody has to do it, and it might just as well be Elijah as any one. But do you think Jephthah ought to have killed his very own daughter just because of a silly oath?"

And thus the little maid of twelve, who had kept her childishness as not all girls of that age do in the Orient, helped her maturer friend to while away some of the weary hours. It was the third day after Zattu had taken his leave amidst noises and alarms. Since he had gone Thisoa found there was a strange void in the house. It was felt indeed by all. Aristarchus said each morning, when Xenodice came to greet him and see if his wound was healing as fast as it should, that his first thought when he waked was of his departed guest. Xenodice herself admitted that the common everyday interests seemed tame. Even the servants talked chiefly about Zattu and hoped he was where Rome would not get hold of him. And Thisoa could not get absorbed in any of her favorite books or in any kind of handiwork. "Where is Zattu?" she found herself continually asking. And what

was he doing day by day in those hills toward which her eyes were ever turning? How she longed to know!

But no tidings came. No tidings could come till some piece of good fortune brought them. An outlaw cannot give clues to his whereabouts. Because he is an outlaw, he must keep out of communication with the seats of authority. The Romans in Capernaum were vigilantly seeking news of the man who had mocked them by slipping out of their hands. To give them the slightest opportunity of getting on his track would be a grievous mistake. No, to all in Capernaum Zattu was for a while deeply buried in those hills that looked down on the Lake of Gennesaret. Not even the Pharisees and elders who had given favorable ear to his pleadings got any word from him.

So Thisoa had to still the longings of her heart as best she could. In companionship she found most solace. She spent hours by her father's bedside. She talked much with her mother, with whom her relation was very close and tender, though not now unreservedly. To no one could she yet reveal her deepest feelings. And the society of such friends as she had was very grateful. These were indeed few. Thisoa's interests were too large and too intellectual to be shared by the young women who grew up in the guarded seclusion of an oriental city. For this reason in part she found the company of her little friend Naomi diverting. In spite of the difference in years the two had long been warmly attached. The girl lived only a few streets away. She was the only daughter of Jairus, an elder of the synagogue and a man whom her father greatly esteemed. The relations of the two households being most friendly, the child had for several years been in the habit of running to see this older acquaintance who always gave her a warm greeting. Because she was a child a freedom was allowed her which to the oriental woman is denied.

But there was one woman in Capernaum whom Thisoa

found wholly and deeply sympathetic and with whom she had formed an intimacy. This was Naarah, the wife of Marcus. To her she went a few days after Zatthu's leave-taking, for the satisfaction given by a genial and responsive mind.

"Naarah," she said as the two friends exchanged greetings, "the dullest maid in Capernaum has come to spend an hour with you. Send her home if you find her unbearable."

"You are making a poor beginning if you expect that to happen," answered Naarah with the touch of genial sarcasm that sometimes marked her rejoinders.

"You judge too quickly. I am so low-spirited I am a torment to myself and I have come to torment you."

"Do begin right away. It is a kind of torment that I always find highly enjoyable."

"Because you are so generous and unselfish. How good you are to give me always so warm a welcome! You seem as glad to see me as if you hadn't as splendid a husband as ever a woman found to take up your thoughts, and two beautiful children to call for all your care."

Thisoa looked at her friend admiringly as she said this; and Naarah was indeed fair to see. The years of her married life had been so supremely happy that they had left no marks of care. Joy shone from the face, and in sweet content it was even more beautiful than when it had captivated Marcus at Rome four years before. Motherly pride now beamed from it at Thisoa's mention of her children and she said,

"They *are* sweet and dear in their innocence, are they not?"

"And thereupon she lifted up the older, a sturdy blue-eyed boy of three, whose resemblance to his father was already striking, who had been clinging to her and gazing at the visitor in round-eyed wonder. To this challenge to her admiration Thisoa responded by taking the little fellow in her arms and fondling him so tenderly that the childish stare was soon replaced by a look of contentment and the tiny lips broke into a smile.

"His precious little heart is a loving one," she said. "O Naarah, I think you are the richest woman in the world."

"So I think too," answered Naarah archly. "But come and see my little Deborah, though I know it will make you envy me to look at her. She is a little fretful today, so I am letting her lie in her cradle."

They went into an adjoining room where lay a year-old babe that had its mother's full dark eyes. Kneeling by its cradle Naarah uttered a few soft notes in the universal mother's language, and the babe which had been restless and peevish looked gleefully up and held out its dimpled arms.

"Yes, I should envy any one but you, Naarah," said Thisoa very gently. "But I can only feel that your Jehovah has joyed in filling your cup of happiness very full. He knew he was giving you only what you deserved."

"Won't you tell me about your life in Rome," she asked when the two friends sat down to talk together, "and how you and Marcus met and learned to care for each other?"

"Why, Thisoa! How can you want to listen to that old, old story of mine again?"

"Just because it is the most beautiful one I have ever heard."

Naarah did not instantly reply. Her quick mind divined that there was an unmentioned reason lurking behind this unexpected request. From her own people she had been hearing about Zatthu and his appealing personality. Her husband had kept her informed about those doings in the house of Aristarchus that had been the talk of all Capernaum. The romance of her own life came back to her and she read the mind of her friend. For a moment her mind turned to those days — how far off they now seemed and yet how fresh was their memory! — when she loved Marcus even though she had no hope of ever seeing him again. Yes, she of all women could appreciate and respect those hidden yearnings which Thisoa could only gratify by listening to a deep emotional

experience that in its beginning was not unlike her own. So it was with a bright and cheery voice that she soon answered,

"Why, surely I will tell the story again if you really wish to hear it. I have never dwelt upon those Roman days to any one but you. The experience was too sacred. But there is little in my heart I am unwilling for you to see."

So Naarah told how she accosted Marcus in a street in Rome when he was playful enough with a flower girl to frighten her though he would have done her no wrong; how she had come face to face with him at the Theater of Marcellus when the terrified mass of spectators was stampeding for the exits; how she had recognized him through his disguise when he fought as a gladiator in the Circus Maximus and had been unable to tear herself away from the terrible conflict though it almost made her heart stop beating to witness it; how Marcus had saved her from an awful fate at a low pleasure resort into which she had been kidnapped and had taken her to her home; how he was stabbed just outside of her grandfather's door and borne unconscious within; and how, as she nursed and tended him, she found that he had loved her even from their first strange meeting but had tried to rule the love out of his heart because she was of a race the Romans looked on with no favor.

"And you loved him, Naarah, even before you knew he had given his heart to you?"

"That is a question you must not ask," replied Naarah smilingly. "I have told you the story. It must speak for itself."

"Well, if it has to speak for itself, I will tell you what it says to me. You did not know you loved Marcus till you saw him fight the gladiator. But as you watched him then, your heart told you you would be wretched and unhappy if you saw him fall; and from that time any man but he would have had a hard task to win you, even though you never thought

to see him again. Now, tell me, Naarah dear, didn't the story speak the truth when it made me interpret it so?"

"I have heard of pupils who were wiser than their teachers," was Naarah's sole response.

"It is true!" cried Thisoa clapping her hands in delight. "It is true, and you cannot deny it. It just had to be so. You saw in Marcus a man so heroic, so strong, so magnificent that the woman in you was touched as it could be but once only. You need not try to cover it up. It was a thing to be proud of. Haven't we women hearts that yearn to give the devotion that lifts us up and ennobles us and is stronger even than death?"

The thought that pressed itself home in Naarah's mind she did not express. Still more sure did she feel that Thisoa's own heart had been touched. This her friend would sometime reveal. But she would wait for the confidence and by words wisely chosen instil the sympathy and comfort she could not openly give. Quietly and soberly she answered,

"It is all true, my dear friend. To love nobly and deeply is a woman's glory. Even though the love be not returned, she can wear it as a sacred garment that helps to whiten and beautify the soul. And if it is given back as she gives it, it makes her life radiant with joy. But alas! how seldom does that occur! Sometimes I cannot help wondering that Jehovah made the world as it is.

"But why am I saying all this? I think even Solomon was puzzled by what he saw and went through — and dear me! I don't wonder that he was, he had so many wives. Let us talk of what we can understand. Here you are, just full of news I want to hear and you haven't told me a word of it yet. You know I haven't seen you once since that bold man of my people was taken into your house and caused such a turbulent time. Tell me the whole story. It is your turn to talk and mine to listen."

"But hasn't Marcus related everything that happened?"

"Of course. But Marcus is a Roman officer. He told things as he saw them. I wish to know how they looked to you."

"But Marcus is always so fair and just."

"True. No man could be more so. But the justest man in the world must give things the color of his own mind. He, vested with Rome's authority, had to look upon Zatthu as a criminal and try to find him. You, whose guest he was, had to try and hide him. Ah, how I laughed at Marcus for being outwitted!"

"Wasn't he angry with you?"

"Marcus angry with me? Why, Thisoa, what a question! Marcus never was angry with me and never could be. Of course I was glad he didn't capture Zatthu. Isn't he one of my own people?"

"Did Marcus in his heart wish to capture him and have him put to death?"

"In his heart, no. Yet he was naturally vexed at failing in a thing he had undertaken. But do begin your story."

So Thisoa began and gave a vivid account of the things the reader has been told in preceding chapters. So spirited was the narration that Naarah followed it with the liveliest interest; and in spite of Thisoa's reserves she saw how and why Zatthu's ardent, soaring spirit had deeply impressed the generous mind of her friend. When the story was ended she said with a burst of pride,

"And he deserved to be free. It was noble of him to order that none of the soldiers guarding the house should be slain. Such a man is worthy to lead and to deliver our people."

"And no one was killed or seriously hurt. I was so thankful when I learned the next morning that it was so. Didn't Marcus admire Zatthu for acting so honorably?"

"I hear his step in the doorway now. He shall tell you himself."

II

Naarah was sitting with her visitor in a small room, not far from the street door of the house, which opened into the one where the little Deborah was resting in her cradle. As soon as Marcus had entered she called to him,

"Come hither, Marcus, please. Come hither and bow to a mind more clever and quick-witted than your own."

Marcus came in with a smile.

"I did not need to set eyes on you," he said as he greeted Thisoa cordially, "to know who was meant by those mischievous words of my wife; and I am quite ready to bow to a craft which showed itself superior to mine."

So saying he made Thisoa a very low and stately bow.

"And now that I have done this act of homage," he resumed, "I hope I have won the right to ask just how I was outwitted."

Thisoa flushed and said laughingly,

"You are a gallant enemy and recognize that all is fair in war. But supposing the war should be on again. What then?"

"Oh, it never will be. Never again will a Hebrew sedition-maker take refuge in your father's house and be hunted by me and my soldiers. But as you are not inclined to betray your secrets, suppose I play the diviner and say that I paid too much attention to that missing key and the rooms it might have unlocked and too little to the garden where Trinion was watering the flowers?"

"Who taught you divination, Marcus? It could not have been Apollo, for you never believed in him."

"No, but was my teacher not a wise one, no matter who he was?"

"So wise that I think I should like to take some lessons from him. But you are welcome to my secret, for surely you

are right in thinking that I shall never again have to exercise my wits in hiding from you a fugitive from Roman justice. We will be friends and if our Hebrew guest visits us again we will ask you to come and sup with him."

"Thinking, I suppose, that as he would not let my men be slain he would not thrust a dagger into me."

"No, of course he would not do that. He is a man of honor. But thinking you would be glad to know him as a friend."

"If he were not Rome's bitter and uncompromising enemy," said Marcus, looking grave and abandoning his bantering mood, "I should indeed be glad to make a friend of him. His is a generous and noble nature. Loath, very loath I was to hunt him with armed men — all the more so because I believe he has done his worst and Rome stands in no danger from him."

Thisoa's face lost some of its color as Marcus pronounced Zatthu not dangerous to Rome. This he noticed. He caught too and understood a significant look from Naarah which Thisoa was too intently looking at Marcus to observe. He would be careful not to wound this spirited girl unnecessarily or rudely cast down her hopes. Still he felt it would be well for her to know the truth as he saw it.

"Why," asked Thisoa anxiously, "do you think Zatthu has done his worst? Why do you think Rome need not fear him?"

"Because her military strength is unconquerable. Every army raised against her will break upon her iron legions as the mightiest billows break upon the rocks."

"But," exclaimed Naarah, eager to show her Hebrew sympathies and eager also to support her friend, "that is what Zatthu himself believes. It is not with armies in themselves that he hopes to conquer Rome. It is with armies led to victory by the living God."

"Yes, yes, you understand," cried Thisoa. "He is sure

that the Jehovah he worships will smite the Romans as He smote the Egyptians in the days of old. Oh, he must, he surely will succeed."

"Yes," said Marcus, "he surely will succeed if Jehovah aids him as He aided Moses against Pharaoh."

"But you have just declared that Rome is unconquerable and need not fear him," said Thisoa in astonishment.

"I spoke truly. Judæa's *armies* can never conquer Rome. There is no limit to the might of Jehovah."

"But He will not act with Zatthu and give him the victory?"

"I do not say. I am not a prophet."

"But what do you think?"

"That question I am slow to answer. You have faith in Zatthu. So has Naarah. So have many. His enthusiasm is kindling. A mood so exalted lifts others into its own fervor. Not a generation passes that does not show some example of it. And there is something noble in such generous enthusiasm. It has wrought much of the good that has been accomplished in the world. When I meet it, I cannot but regard it with profound respect."

"But you never share it?"

"Oh, no. I am far from saying that. There is even now a rapturous feeling abroad that I too share."

"What is that?"

"Reverence for Jesus of Nazareth."

"For Jesus of Nazareth!" said Thisoa slowly and wonderingly. "The very man whom Zatthu thought of at first as one who had greater claims to leadership than he himself, but finally turned from as unworthy. And you really believe in him?"

"Most heartily I do."

"What makes you do so?"

"Things that I have seen. Above all, the cure he wrought for my servant Hacho."

“Did he really cure Hacho of illness?”

“Of desperate illness. I told your father the story. Has he not told you?”

“No. Probably he will. But our Hebrew guest has taken up all our thoughts of late.”

“I will leave it to him to relate all that happened. Suffice it to say that Hacho was sick unto death and Jesus healed him without even seeing him.”

“Perhaps the disease had spent its strength and he was destined to get well. How could any sickness prevail against such a stalwart man as Hacho?”

“You shall hear from him. I will find him and let him speak for himself.”

Marcus went out and soon came bringing the big Phrygian with him. More than a head taller than the average man, taller even than Marcus himself and proportionally large of body without having any cumbersome flesh upon him, he might well seem immune from the diseases that vanquish the human frame.

“Here is a lady, Hacho,” said Marcus as they entered together, “whom you know and who wishes to talk with you. She won’t admit that such a stout fellow as you could have had a mortal illness.”

“Indeed, it is hard to believe it, Hacho,” said Thisoa with a friendly smile; for she, like every one who knew him, had a most cordial feeling toward this faithful and kindly servant of Marcus. “Did you ever hear the story of Alcestis?”

“No. Won’t you tell it to me?” replied Hacho deferentially.

“Alcestis, the wife of Admetus, was carried off by Death. But Hercules thought she was needed in her own home more than in Hades; so he went after Death, gave him a sound drubbing and brought Alcestis back to her husband and children. Now, Hacho, I am sure you could beat Death as easily as Hercules did.”

"I fear not," answered Hacho, shaking his head solemnly. "Death had claimed me when my master found one who saved me from his grasp."

"You got well Hacho, of course. But I cannot help thinking it was your splendid health, your unmatched strength, that carried you through and made it impossible for the disease, whatever it was, to destroy the spark of life in that great body of yours."

"You would not think so if you could have seen me. Little by little I lost power over my body. I had to lie still, and I could not lift my head or move my hand. At last my heart was hardly beating, and it seemed as if every breath I drew must be my last. When of a sudden strength flowed all through me like a flood. Almost as quickly as a bow twangs and sends the arrow on its way, from being in the very arms of death I found myself as well and strong as I am now. Oh, I could never tell the wonderful feeling I had when that new life was given me. It seemed as if every bit of my body tingled with joy. I was too astonished to speak at first; but I sat upright in my bed. Then I sprang to my feet. And then I cried out in my delight, 'I am healed! I am healed! I am healed!'"

Hacho's eye kindled as he said this and his face had a look at once solemn and beautiful. No one could behold it and not see that he had been through a great experience. The three who had been listening were all silent after he had finished. They were too deeply impressed to speak, and at a sign from Marcus, Hacho, after looking at Thisoa and bowing respectfully, turned and went away.

It was Thisoa who spoke first after he had gone.

"Sometime," she said, "I must see Jesus of Nazareth. Perhaps he too is called to do great things. But I am sure he is deluding himself and deluding others if he is aiming to be the deliverer of his nation. That is Zatthu's task."

"Yes, surely that is Zatthu's task," said Naarah. "Let

Jesus heal the sick. That he does it, I can bear witness; for I saw Hacho turn suddenly from death to life. But the emblem that my suffering country needs is the eagle not the dove. It is the leader of sublime faith and heroic will that will enlist Jehovah on our side and make Him fight for us against the power of Rome, even as He fought for us of old."

"And if He does," said Marcus instantly, "my sword will not be drawn against Judæa,"

"I am sure it would not, Marcus," rejoined Naarah. "In faith, though not in blood, you belong to my people."

"But, Marcus," said the puzzled Thisoa, "you are a Roman centurion. How could you look on and see the power of Rome crumble and fall?"

"If Jehovah bids it crumble, let it perish. I am a servant of Jehovah before I am a centurion of Rome."

"And yet you keep your office and discharge its duties."

"Why should I not? Rome has conquered the world. Where she rules she quells disorder and makes law prevail. True, her rule is sometimes harsh. This proud people hates it and kicks against it. It may be Jehovah wills to set them free. But I see no signs of it, and seeing none I serve Jehovah by walking as uprightly as I can, and I serve Rome by performing all the duties of my office as faithfully as I can."

"Even though those duties bid you hunt a man who is hiding from you?" said Thisoa, smiling faintly.

"Yes," answered Marcus, smiling also though his mood was grave. "Duty has a very ancient habit of taking a disagreeable shape."

"And it won't ever take the pleasant shape of bidding you stand still and see this man, under the leading of the God he and you both worship, accomplish his great purpose?"

"I fear not."

"Why are you so sure? Do not the sacred books of the Hebrews give promise of a man who is to come and redeem this people?"

“They do.”

“Then why may not Zatthu be that man?”

“Those promises are hard to understand. Even Naarah’s grandfather, whom I talked much with about them, found them very difficult to read. I myself have studied them. They are very puzzling, but I see in them no warrant for thinking that in a man like Zatthu they are to find their fulfilment. Let him have the honor that is due him. He is a patriot and a devoted one. But not from him will the light come that is to give Judæa a new birth. If that light is dawning even now, it is to come from Jesus of Nazareth. I know not how, but I am sure it will be so. The power that is in him is not his own. It is given him by God.”

“You are yourself not easy to understand, Marcus,” answered Thisoa after a moment of thought. “You judge things by the light of a stern clear reason, and yet you do not always judge them so. You closed your mind against the religion of Rome; you opened it to that of Israel. You rule out feeling from your estimate of Zatthu; you let it color and even control your view of Jesus of Nazareth.”

“And your father — is he not a man of clear sound judgment?”

“Surely. No man more so.”

“And do not kindness, sympathy and affection often temper his estimates of men and things?”

“Yes, and that is what makes him just.”

“Then why am I a puzzle to you?”

“Because you go much further than he in letting feeling come in sometimes and mould your opinions utterly. My father accepts no religion. You reject that of Rome, but worship Jehovah as devoutly as Naarah’s own people. My father never gives more than hearty respect to other men; you seem almost to have bowed down before Jesus.”

“As I think your father will sometime bow. As the whole

world may sometime bow. I see in him what I have never seen in man before."

"Even as I see in Zatthu a soul loftier than that possessed by other men. I believe what he achieves will be spoken of when Jesus is forgotten."

"I said I was no prophet; yet I as well as you seem to be prophesying. Only the years can show which of us is right."

"Yes, the years will show. The years will show," repeated Thisoa very slowly and as if trying to pierce the future's veil. "Ah, would that they might show it soon! Waiting is so weary."

III

When the Babe was born at Bethlehem the Hebrews were in quest of light. They had reason to be so. Light had been promised them. Glorious and soul rejoicing were the promises made to them through their prophets. A leader was to come and lift them into a greatness their nation had never known. The glory of Solomon was to be eclipsed. Their new day was to have a splendor before which that of Rome would pale. And the time was ripe. In power and wealth and numbers they had been growing fast. Only the promised Messiah was needed to break Rome's hateful yoke and raise them to unheard-of grandeur.

So thought the men who were wise in their books of prophecy and story. There stood the promises clearly written. They could not be misunderstood. They could not fail. The Messiah must come. The mouth of Jehovah had spoken it. But not to a rebellious or a disobedient people would he be sent. Their sacred annals showed that Jehovah was a jealous God who visited the iniquities of the fathers upon the children even to the third and fourth generation. In the olden days the people, God's chosen people, had been terribly punished whenever they had sinned. The sword of the heathen, the noisome pestilence, or fire from heaven had cut off those who worshipped false gods or violated the Law. Of supreme importance was it, then, that their blood should be kept pure, their worship undefiled, and the Law rigidly obeyed. On marriages with aliens they should look with scorn. A mongrel race Jehovah would never countenance as His own. The very intercourse with Gentiles was offensive in the eyes of Him who had of old commanded them to put the heathen to the sword. It would dull their pride. It would breed pollution. And all the rites and ceremonies commanded them by Moses must be most sacredly observed. It was Jehovah who had

given them those ordinances. He had given them that His own people might be truly His children, from generation to generation. By unvaryingly performing all these ordinances, by keeping every jot and tittle of the Law, they would be His children. By forgetting them, by trampling on the Law, they would be no better than the Gentiles who bowed down to idols and invited Jehovah's wrath.

No wonder that the Pharisees who thought thus looked askance at Jesus of Nazareth. No wonder that the synagogue elders of Capernaum saw in Zatthu rather than in Jesus the leader who would bring the promised day. And no wonder that Zatthu himself was offended by the readiness of Jesus to violate the rigid Hebrew tradition. In Capernaum and in every centre of culture in Palestine the tradition had become such a fetish that its spirit was lost. It had engendered a sanctimoniousness that is fatal to true worship. And to Jesus sanctimoniousness was as offensive as was the departure from tradition to the Pharisees. So with divine clearness of vision Jesus turned for sympathy and understanding to the common people who heard him gladly. He turned to rough fishermen and publicans; and from the scribes and Pharisees he turned sorrowfully away.

Yet these very men were anxious for light. They were patriots, eager to see their nation rise from servitude to power. And Zatthu himself was a humble and a very earnest seeker after truth. Could he have been convinced that another rather than he was called to lift Israel's yoke, he would gladly have submitted to his leadership. Here was the tragedy that was being enacted in Judæa. It was those who wanted the light that condemned the light. Panoplied in wisdom as they verily believed themselves to be, they failed to see the true light that lighteth every man that cometh into the world. It was one more example of the eternally repeated story: When wisdom worships its own formulas, its day is done.

These then were stirring days in which Thisoa set herself upon the quest for truth. They were days in which the Truth was working as a mighty winnowing fan. Not in Capernaum merely, but all through Palestine the sheaves of the understanding were being threshed and the wheat separated from the chaff. Not that Thisoa could see this. It was clear only to one divinely illumined eye. None the less her quest was a very earnest one; for she herself was a genuine lover of the truth. To her mind Zatthu stood for it. To her ardent spirit, that was so easily thrilled by a great and soaring purpose, he made the same appeal that he did to the learned and patriotic men of his own race. He embodied the truth. He was called to fulfil the promises made to his people of old.

None the less Thisoa had been deeply impressed by what Zatthu himself had told her of Jesus. If this man of Nazareth was not born to lead and deliver Israel, he was yet generous and merciful and pure. Listening to Zatthu, she had doubted Jesus' power to heal, though a chord of tender sympathy had been touched in her as she learned how compassionate he had been to the erring woman. And now that she found Marcus believed in his cures and Hacho had given convincing testimony that he himself had been saved from death, she could not but wonder whether he was not a larger and a nobler figure than she had supposed; Marcus was so wise. For his judgment she had such profound respect. In questioning it, in representing it as less sound than that of her father, she had merely been acting on the defensive. Championing Zatthu, she was drawn into combating the mind which refused to see in him what she herself saw. In her heart she believed Marcus had a saner and a deeper knowledge of men and things than even her father had. In her heart she thought the more of him for accepting the religion of Naarah's people and becoming a devout worshipper of their God.

Did her own soul long for refuge in some equally quiet

spiritual haven? The need was beginning to be felt. From the polytheism of the Greeks she had turned as her father and her mother had. Those deities of Homer with their human qualities were interesting beings. Some of them were reverend and austere. But to adore and worship them was to her quite impossible. Plato she read with interest and often found herself in sympathy with his elevated thought. But the bent of her mind was not toward philosophy, and those writings of his which told of the life and death of Socrates were the ones to which she most often turned. It was deeds that made the strongest appeal to her. She loved the tale of noble achievement whether real or imagined. She read Herodotus' account of the Spartans at Thermopylæ over and over again. The Antigone of Sophocles was her favorite play. Homer's heroes she almost looked upon as personal friends. Achilles, Diomed and Odysseus seemed more like living persons to her than many of the people she knew.

It was natural then that Zattu's ardor should have kindled a spark in her. Here was a man who was cherishing an heroic purpose. He seemed born to do great things. True, it would not fall to him to smite down mighty men of valor as Achilles did. That were too truculent and bloody a part for a man of his high spiritual zeal. But he would head armies. He would be sustained by the terrible might of Jehovah. He would lay Rome's eagles in the dust. To an undreamed of greatness he would lift up his people and that greatness he would share. Here indeed was a man to be admired, to be encouraged, to be watched with painful and thrilling interest as he gathered the men of Israel to his banner.

To this enthusiastic spirit of hers religion could make a mighty appeal. But the appeal must profoundly reach the emotions and thrill them through and through. It must demand her homage through sublimity of achievement or of character. Neither staid ritual nor dry maxim could touch a vibrant chord in Thisoa's mind. But limitless self-sacrifice

she was capable of viewing with the reverence of all her being.

Natively resolute, not easily shaken in her deeply formed convictions, she went home from Naarah's house in a perturbed state of mind. Marcus must in this instance be mistaken. Longing for freedom, Israel was surely calling for a man like Zattu. He and he only was to lift her up from her low estate. Jesus, the friend of publicans and sinners, could not be the one to restore the grandeur and the glory of King Solomon. But she must see him and judge him for herself. She must also read those ancient puzzling prophecies which told of the nature and the coming of the Messiah.

IV

Had Aristarchus not been kept within doors by his wound, and had he and Xenodice and Thisoa not had their minds taken up by Zatthu, they would have found themselves thinking and speaking daily of Jesus of Nazareth. For at this very time he was in the mouths of all Galilee. Driven out of Nazareth, he had come to Capernaum and from that as a centre he had gone forth, teaching and working his miraculous cures. If the scribes and Pharisees, shocked by his disregard of their traditions, frowned upon him, "the common people heard him gladly."

This simple statement is indeed almost the only comment the Gospels make upon his power of reaching the multitudes. But in it is a world of meaning. To all the needy there had come a friend. The social outcast, the poor, the sorrowing and all those brought low by bodily ailment found a comforter at hand. The sinful were made to hope, the mourner was cheered, the leper, the blind, the lame and the fever-stricken were healed. Light dawned on all who sat in darkness. The misery-laden felt joy rising in their hearts. And it was one benignant presence that brought this mighty influx of good. Through crowded streets, through quiet lanes and by-ways, over the hills and fields and by the lakeside there walked a gracious figure scattering blessings as he went. All Galilee was thrilled. Everywhere flashed the tidings that a healer had come to whose power there were no bounds. Whithersoever he went crowds flocked to see him. Those bowed by infirmity pressed near him to receive his healing touch. If any were too ill to move, their friends brought them within sight of his tender eye. The blind waited where they knew he would pass and cried out when they heard him draw near.

Yes, all Galilee was thrilled. The whole province was in a

ferment. What cared the multitudes for the disapproving voice of the men of enlightenment and learning? Their gratitude had to have expression. This man had stretched forth his hand, and lo! their ills were gone. Their hearts went out to him. Their talk was of him and of him only. If he drew near they would leave all and go to him. When he was gone they would long to see him again. Surely he had been sent by God. He had come to bring a new day to the earth. He had come to reign, and what a reign it would be! For this man would be such a king as the world had never seen. He would lift up the humble and cast down the proud. He would open the prison house and give liberty to all who languished there. He would banish injustice and oppression. He would fill the whole earth with rejoicing, and misery and darkness would give place to light.

But the more the people exulted, the more did the worshippers of tradition frown. They did not indeed begin by being hostile to this strange and puzzling figure. He really seemed to have uncommon powers. It might be he was sent to do some great work by Jehovah. If so, it would be well to give him countenance and be in his good graces when the time for large action came. He was allowed to lead and teach in the synagogues. This really had to be, for his followers demanded it. And, guardedly, hospitality was shown him. But how had he rewarded this gracious and kindly treatment? In the synagogue at Nazareth he had blasphemously claimed to be the one foretold by the ancient Messianic prophecies; and when a kindly Pharisee had feasted him in Capernaum, he had let his own unclean followers swarm into the house. And what strange things had he done at Jerusalem! Those who plied a lawful trade in the temple and were a help to the devout worshipper he scourged and drove out; their property he treated with contempt; themselves he vilified by calling them thieves. For the Law given by Moses he had little respect. By setting aside its observances he gave the worst

possible example to his ignorant and easy-going followers. If redemption was to come to Israel, surely it could only come through the men who had deeply studied the Sacred Books and knew how to interpret them. But these were the men he neglected and even openly slandered by calling them hypocrites. Every day he was making it more plain that he had not been called by Jehovah. His miracles he worked by magic and sorcery. His power must be given him by the Evil One. He was a menace to the true worship of Jehovah. The more he won the hearts of the people, the more menacing he became. He must be watched. Every means must be used to thwart and suppress him if this power continued to grow.

And daily his power did grow among the people; so Galilee was in the throes of a mighty upheaval.

V

The days went by. Summer gave place to autumn. Still, Thisoa had not seen Jesus of Nazareth.

It was not that her resolve had weakened. A deliberately formed purpose she never lost sight of till she had accomplished it. But her father, who might have helped her in such a matter, had gone on another commercial journey, and a long one, soon after his wound was healed. Jesus himself was not always to be seen. He was much in the surrounding country. When he was in Capernaum, there was no one place where he could be found. To seek him, therefore, was not easy; to summon him was futile. A summons to heal, he would indeed obey. But mere curiosity he would not heed.

But Thisoa was not impatient. An excellent Hebrew scholar, she had read much the Messianic prophecies in Isaiah and pondered over them. They were indeed, as Marcus had said, not easy to understand. But even though they seemed for the most part very dark to her, she found some of them strangely and startlingly significant. Could they mean such embattled hosts and such a mighty overthrow of reigning authority as Zatthu was preparing? And did they point to such a leadership as he was trying to establish? She could not but doubt it. But then, Zatthu had not claimed that he was the Messiah. He had not been so arrogant as that. These strange and wonderful prophecies must be for some far-off time. What Zatthu asserted — and asserted with unshakable faith and convincing ardor — was that Jehovah would help his people now as He had helped them of old. What God demanded in this latter day as in the olden time was faith. Let the people believe in Him and He would side with them. Let their armies take the field in His name, and He would make them invincible.

It was Marcus who had dwelt upon the Messianic prophe-

cies. He had brought them up and denied that they could point to Zatthu; that they might have their fulfilment in Jesus, he was not unready to believe.

In Jesus! How all things seemed to be centering around this man of Nazareth! Those who did not believe in him were growing to fear him. His followers were ever increasing in numbers; they hung upon his words and had wholly lost their hearts to him. He was placing all Galilee upon the judgment seat. To stand aloof and have no opinion about him was becoming impossible. More and more fully did Thisoa realize this as the days went by. She too must see and judge.

This thought was in her mind as she was on her way to visit Naarah one afternoon in the month of Tisri. The early autumn rains had begun, but this day was so pleasant as to challenge all who could to come out into the open. For the sun had lost the intensity of Elul, which is the September of the Roman calendar, and the air was agreeably cool. Not surprised then was Thisoa to find her way blocked by a throng of people as she came to one of the more open parts of the city. Curiosity bade her linger for a moment on the outskirts of the gathering before trying to pass around it. Tidings of some kind were undoubtedly being spread. Possibly they might tell of Zatthu and his doings.

What the crowd had assembled for she did not have to inquire. As she joined it she heard a voice speaking words of solemn warning to which all were listening in absolute stillness. The speaker had the whole body of hearers under a spell; but who was he? This question that shaped itself in her mind she felt sure she could answer. Who could this be but the man whose words were stirring all Galilee? But to make certain she asked a woman who stood next to her.

"Is this Jesus of Nazareth?"

Barely glancing at the one who could put such a strange inquiry, the woman answered,

"Surely. No one else speaks like that," and gave her whole attention to what was being said. So Thisoa also listened with the deepest interest.

She listened but could not see. Tall though she was she could not overlook the heads of those standing before her. Neither could she peer through any openings in the densely packed throng. Much to her regret she also found she could not catch the speaker's every word. She was too far away. For though the words were denunciatory they were not passionate or loudly spoken. Always the voice was low and sweet and when its tones grew most intense, they showed a deep sorrow that was devoid of anger. Unsparing indeed were the utterances. Even though she heard them imperfectly, Thisoa was thrilled by them. The generation was declared to be a generation of vipers; and all were solemnly warned that they would have to give account of every word they might speak. To a question put by some one who was standing near the speaker, came the instant answer that only an evil and adulterous generation sought after a sign. And then came a startling personal claim coupled with further rebuke of the existing generation. It would be condemned by the men of Nineveh who had repented at the preaching of Jonah, for a greater than Jonah had now come. It would be condemned by the queen of the south who had gone from afar to hear Solomon, and a greater than Solomon had come.

But even while the speaker was yet talking an interruption came. The voice ceased for a moment and a whisper ran quickly through the crowd that the mother and brethren of Jesus were present and wished to speak with him but could not make their way through the densely packed throng. And with that strange quickness of discernment that a mass of human beings so often shows, all present began to turn their eyes on a group of persons standing close to Thisoa. She too looked curiously at them and saw a middle-aged woman, who had plainly not lived a life of ease and luxury, and several

young men unquestionably of the toiling class. But hardly had she begun to gaze when the voice of Jesus was once more heard and commanded the attention of all. It seemed to be refusing what had been asked, and Thisoa caught these last words solemnly uttered,

“Whosoever shall do the will of my Father which is in heaven, the same is my brother and sister and mother.”

The voice ceased and once again Thisoa looked at the group standing near, as did all those assembled. Their faces she could not see well, but just for an instant she caught the expression in the eyes of the woman who, she realized, must be the mother of Jesus and she was puzzled by it. It did not seem to show either pride or humiliation, but there was something wistful in it not easily to be forgotten.

The people began to disperse and Thisoa went on her way. It was in a very thoughtful mood that she arrived at Naarah’s and she showed this in her face.

“Why, Thisoa,” exclaimed Naarah as she met her, “you look as if you hadn’t waked from your last night’s sleep but were still dreaming.”

“I am not sure but that I am.”

“Do sit down at once and tell me what has happened. What have you seen?”

“I wish I knew.”

“Tell me all, and let me see if I cannot help you.”

So Thisoa related what has just been told, and ended by saying,

“Now who is this man who openly rebuffs his own mother and yet claims to be greater than your great men of old?”

Naarah did not answer at once. When she spoke she said, “Why not seek his mother and find out from her?”

“Ah, it is because you are a mother yourself that you say that.”

“In other words, being only too ready to talk of my own

children, I count upon every mother's showing the same feeling."

Thisoa smiled, but her mood was too serious to lend itself to raillery.

"If you have the 'failing,' Naarah," she said, "you have it wonderfully under control. But of course you know the mother's heart, and perhaps your suggestion is a wise one. I do not quite see though how to act upon it. We neither of us know the mother of Jesus."

"She is of my people. I can get acquainted with her."

"Just to draw her out and make her talk of the son who has almost disowned her before others? Would that be right? Is not a mother's heart too sacred to have its deepest feelings probed?"

"Leave that to me, a mother. She shall be treated with absolute sympathy and kindness. But I am going to seek her out and know her. Marcus will make it easy for me to do so. There is nothing he cannot arrange with that clever mind of his and the power of Rome behind him. And when acquaintanceship is established, I will see that you share it. So wait a little and I promise you that you shall hear from me."

VI

Mary the mother of Jesus lingered a while in Capernaum, and Marcus easily paved the way for Naarah to become acquainted with her. First of all he sought her himself, made an official inquiry of a trivial character, vanquished her timidity and suspicion by his grave courtesy, spoke with deep feeling and gratitude of the cure that had been wrought for Hacho, and went away. Naarah's approach was made with equal delicacy and kindness. As a result Thisoa soon received a message that she was to come to Naarah's house at a given hour. The mother of Jesus had promised to come at that time and see Naarah's children.

Thisoa went gladly. The woman that she met she viewed at first with deep interest; but soon her feeling became one of reverence and awe. In the sweet patient face there was that which she knew not how to read. For more was to be seen there than the deep peace and content that comes from gratified maternal desire and the play of maternal tenderness. The full dark eyes were soft and dreamy. The light in them seemed to come from some strange unwonted depth of experience. Their gaze did not show inquiry. It revealed a spirit that was more given to brooding over its own hidden life than sounding the minds of others. Those who searched them were met with a brief answering glance of faintly roused interest and then their look was far away. The voice was always low and gentle. It never became animated. Neither was the smile that sometimes played for a moment over the lips a bright and merry one. It suggested mere human sympathy without mirthfulness. The whole being seemed resting under a solemn hush which it feared to break. It was as if listening, listening, ever listening for some low sweet strain that earth's noises might easily drown.

She was fondling Naarah's children when Thisoa entered

and first saw her. That her heart was touched by their innocence and their captivating ways was manifest. She took each of them in her arms by turns. Each rested there in full contentment. But she did not win them by the toss of the head and merry laughing sounds that so commonly seem alluring to babyhood. It was the eyes that looked into theirs that held them. In their tender depths the child saw that which bade it be still and tranquil. Not even little Deborah smiled as she gazed up into the calm, sweet face in innocent wonder. But she knew she was in some haven of rest.

When she had given the two children due attention, Mary sat down with Naarah and Thisoa. Her comment upon them was not the fulsome one that the maternal cravings are supposed to demand. She said simply,

"They are sweet. You are blessed."

"Yes," replied Naarah, "and the blessing will grow more rich as the years pass, will it not?"

The answer did not come immediately and the question seemed to bring just the shadow of a cloud over the face. After a moment, she said,

"May Jehovah make it so."

"I am sure that He will, though I cannot hope the years will bring me what they have brought to you. For you are the mother of one to whom all are looking for help and healing."

Just a faint look of pride was in Mary's eyes as she answered,

"Yes, my Jesus has healed many."

"And are you not very proud to be his mother?" asked Thisoa.

"Yes, proud, and yet fearful and troubled." The shadow seemed to deepen a little as she said this.

"Of what are you fearful?"

"He came to me in a wonderful way, as no other child ever came into the world. In his childhood and his youth he was not like my other children. And this life he is living now —

is it not marvelous? But it fills me with dread. I know not what the end will be."

"Tell us of his childhood, will you not?" asked Naarah. "I should love to hear about it."

"And how was it that the way he came to you was wonderful?" said Thisoa. "Will you not tell us about that too?"

"That story I could hardly tell. It is too sacred. I can only say, an angel came and brought me the strange tidings that Jesus was to be born. My soul was filled with wonder and awe."

Her two listeners were awed by her solemn manner. They felt that further questions were out of place and sat in silence waiting for her to speak again. Presently she resumed, but her sentences came slowly, brokenly. It seemed as if before each utterance she waited for some power outside of and beyond herself to tell her what to say, what to refrain from saying. Was the same angel that once came to her with the wondrous tidings now ordering her speech? Naarah could not help so wondering as she thought how God's messengers had come to His chosen ones in the early far-off days.

"Because the angel had come to tell me of him," she said, "I knew him as a gift from God. And yet it did not quite seem as if he were given to *me*. I hardly dared think of him as mine. Even when he was a babe there was that in his eyes which made me stand still and wonder.

"He soon learned to understand me and to talk. It seemed to come of itself. I taught him little. But he did not use many words. When he sat on my knee he would often pay no heed to what I said but would keep his eyes fixed before him as if busy with thoughts of his own. Again, he would look up at me and smile — oh, what a wondrous smile he had! — but say nothing."

Here Mary paused and seemed to lose herself in reverie. But very soon she became conscious of her hearers and began again.

"He learned to read just as he had learned to understand

and to speak. I used to wonder if Jehovah's angels taught him. He could laugh and be merry. He loved to be with other children. He played with them. But best of all he liked to read our Sacred Books and ponder over them. As I watched him do this, a strange feeling of awe and dread came over me sometimes. For our Books spoke to him as to no one else. As he pored over them his face would light up with joy. Then sometimes he would seem to be startled and to see things that caused him wonder and pain.

"He grew wise, so very wise that I realized more and more that he was not mine. When he was twelve a thing happened that brought this home to me. My husband and I took him with us to Jerusalem. Never was a child more obedient and dutiful than he; but when we returned he remained behind. We thought he was journeying home with a company of our friends. When we found he was not, we hurried back to Jerusalem to seek him. After much trouble we found him in the temple talking with our wisest men. To them his deep knowledge of our Sacred Books gave pleasure; but our hearts had been so anxious that we rebuked him and asked why he had caused us such sorrow. But he in turn looked at us rebukingly and asked us if we did not know he must be about his Father's business."

Again Mary paused. Naarah and Thisoa had listened absorbed and hoped she would say more. But they sat in silence without venturing to suggest it. They were not disappointed, for after a few moments she spoke again and brought her story to an end.

"From that hour I felt that he belonged to Jehovah, even more than Samuel did after Jehovah called him. Yet he lived on with us and heeded perfectly the commandment of Moses which says, 'Honor thy father and thy mother.' I loved to have him in the house for his presence was a blessing. When he was out of it I felt as if there was not any sunlight.

"My husband is a carpenter and day after day Jesus toiled

with him in the shop. He worked hard and whatever he put his hand to he took pride in doing well. But sometimes when I went into the shop — and I stole in often for my heart ever drew me there — I would find that he was standing still with his hand on the saw or plane and was looking far away. Once when I went in he had paused from his work to read in one of our books he had by him and his face had a troubled look. I could not help going to him and asking him what it was that grieved him. He gazed at me tenderly for a moment without speaking and then, resting his finger on the scripture, said slowly in words which I knew were not his own but those of the ancient prophecy, ‘As many were astonished at thee; his visage was so marred more than any man and his form more than the sons of men.’

“That question that he asked us when we found him in the temple at Jerusalem haunted me ever afterwards. I was ever fearing the time when he would leave us, and our home would be his no more. And now the time has come. He has really gone about his Father’s business. The way he has chosen seems strange to me. He helps the common people and makes them his friends. The scribes and the Pharisees he rebukes and turns them against him. I do not understand it at all, but I am sure he is wise. I am sure he is doing what Jehovah sent him into the world to do.”

“I heard him only a few days ago,” said Thisoa. “He was asked for a sign — I think it was some of the scribes and Pharisees that asked him — and he said it was only an evil and adulterous generation that wanted a sign. They must have been stung by the reproach. And then he went on to say wonderful things about the judgment those who lived long ago would pass on those who lived today, because one who was very great had come and the people would not repent. Yes, they were wonderful things that he said. I have been thinking much about them.”

Mary cast at Thisoa a quick apprehensive glance the mo-

ment her words showed she had been present when Jesus had disclaimed full human kinship. She listened attentively till Thisoa ended; then she said quickly,

"You saw then how Jesus would not recognize his brothers and me, his mother, before those who had assembled to hear him. Did you think it strange?"

"Yes, I could not really help thinking so."

"You must not think so. I have shown you why you must not. Jesus belongs to Jehovah, not to me. He does only what is right. He must be about his Father's business. And yet I cannot help being proud, oh, so very, very proud, that I gave him birth."

Mary's face was beautiful as she said these last words. It showed pride, but a pride so chastened that a deep humility could also be read there; and the eyes had a strange look of yearning for that which no human sympathy could give. Presently she continued,

"Yes, I shall always be proud of that. I was his mother, and through all these years he has been a kind and loving son to me. The love is still in his heart. I know it is there and it will be there as long as he lives. But he is called to do wonderful things, more wonderful I sometimes think than have ever been done before upon the earth. I must not stand in the way of them. Let Jehovah's will be done. Yes, let it be done even if it brings suffering to him, as I fear it may. My people have done very cruel things sometimes. And he, so gentle, so kind, so tender, and yet so eager to rebuke all the evil that he sees -- will they love and honor him? Ah, if they should bring only sorrow to his heart, my own would be very, very sore."

As Mary said these words her eyes moistened and her lip trembled. Controlling herself in a moment she looked gratefully on her two hearers and said,

"You have been most kind to let a mother open her heart

to you. May Jehovah bless you both. Now I must say, Farewell."

"Farewell," said Naarah as with deep tenderness she kissed the sweet kindly face. "But I will not say, 'May Jehovah bless you.' For surely He has blessed you abundantly already."

Thisoa too was deeply moved as she said her word of parting, but she sat in silence after Mary had gone. Neither did Naarah feel like speaking immediately; but presently she asked,

"Was it not well that we got the mother's story? Could we have learned from any one else what we have learned from her?"

"From no one else."

"And now tell me what you have learned."

"I could not tell you. I do not know myself. I do not think that I shall know till after many days."

VII

Many times after listening to Mary's story Thisoa wandered through the city in the hope of again finding Jesus speaking to a gathering of the people. Never rigidly bound by conventions, she would in any case have refused to obey them blindly. She would have carried out her purpose even though it had been a noticeable infringement of oriental custom for her to go freely and unattended about Capernaum. As it was, her action could not have been regarded peculiar, for her quest was the common one. To see and hear Jesus was the one ardent longing of man and woman, young and old, throughout Galilee.

But she was not successful. Once or twice she got word that Jesus was in the city and was teaching or performing cures; but the news never reached her in time to make a meeting possible. And after a good many days something happened which demanded her time and thought.

Her little friend who prattled so innocently about her doll fell ill. Naomi was sick of a fever and she asked for Thisoa. In Thisoa she had always confided. Not even her mother seemed able to soothe and comfort her like this friend who had always heard her with sympathy, and never uttered a word of impatience or rebuke. So Thisoa went to the bedside every day and passed hours there in ministering to the fretful and suffering child.

"Do you like to be with me? Am I not a great care and trouble to you?" asked the little girl one day as she opened her eyes wide and looked intently at Thisoa.

"No, dear. If you love to have me with you, I am happy to be here," was Thisoa's answer; and as she saw the look of contentment that came into the flushed and burning face, she felt that what she began to say out of mere sympathy was said with truth.

Not constantly could her ministrations be active and she had much time to think. It was in one direction that her thoughts were always turning. Where was Zatthu and what was he doing? More than two months had passed since his midnight flight from Capernaum; and still there was no word from him. Did this mean that so far he had failed? No, surely there was no reason for believing that. His task was stupendous. It must make headway slowly. It must be performed in secrecy, besides. No, it could not fail. Some day he would suddenly appear with an army behind him. From every side men would flock to his banner. The Romans would be overwhelmed before they could strike one vigorous blow and those disparaging assertions of Marcus would be belied.

And then her mind would dwell on the man who was raising no standard and seemed to have no thought of war or conquest, but who was winning the hearts of all the people of Galilee. How different the two men were! How unlike were the ends they had in view! Surely, Zatthu's was the higher and the grander end, for it concerned a whole nation's welfare. Jesus, on the other hand, seemed indifferent to the greatness of his country. He only aimed to heal the body when he found it was diseased and to purify the heart when it was the seat of evil desires. A noble end, it was true. But the Hebrew people were under a foreign yoke and this could not be shaken off by vanquishing disease or abating wickedness.

And yet — that healing power was so wonderful! Whence came it? What did it mean? And after all, was it not for some purpose larger than could now be grasped that this man, about whom his mother talked so beautifully, was brought into the world? It was all very perplexing. But to free the body of its ills was a blessing indeed. She looked at the bed where little Naomi lay and wondered why the power had not been called to her deliverance. In part, no doubt,

because her father shrank from the criticism of his associates. Jairus was an open-minded man. He would have given Zatthu the same favorable opinion of Jesus that Joiada had expressed. Steadily had he believed that the one who healed diseases without number was to be viewed with kindly eyes. But he found that his friends in the synagogue were by no means in accord with him. They looked upon Jesus with profound dislike and they treated with coldness all who disagreed with them.

It was however the physician Ammihud — a much narrower and more petty-minded man than Malluch — who had really prevented an appeal to the great healer. Called in as soon as Naomi was sick, he came every day and every day left some medicine or potion. In the beginning with interest, soon with dislike, Thisoa had watched him and his movements. He was short, middle-aged, bald-headed and spare of body. It was an unctuous smile that was now and then to be seen on his withered face; but his look was furtive and his eye was without the light of kindness. As he entered the room, crouching forward and rubbing his hands together, his greeting was always the same,

“And how is our little Naomi today? Better, much better, I am sure.”

Then, sitting by the bedside and taking the pulse, he would nod the head as he said,

“The fever still high, but we must have patience, patience. My medicines cannot fail to bring a cure.”

And after a parting injunction to the mother and a renewed assertion of his skill, he would go on his way.

Quiet sleep the drugs did sometimes give, but that was all. The burning fever wore away the strength. Too weak to talk, Naomi lay still upon the bed. Yet she always seemed glad to have Thisoa with her, and once in a while she would recognize her by a smile. But the day came when she passed

wholly into unconsciousness and her pallor showed that death was near.

"Why have you deceived me thus?" demanded her father of Ammihud. "Only yesterday you assured me that the disease had spent itself and she would speedily mend."

"My medicines are potent," replied the physician, shrugging his shoulders. "They cure when cure is possible. But nothing can be done against the will of Jehovah."

"Oh, but it cannot be Jehovah's will that my Naomi should die," cried the grief-stricken mother. "Is not Jesus of Nazareth in Capernaum? Find him, my husband! Find him! He heals all who are sick and languishing. He will heal my own dear child."

"I will seek him," answered Jairus. "I will seek him at once. My brethren of the synagogue will censure me. But my child is dying. It is our only hope."

So saying, he turned to go. As he did so Ammihud, who plainly resented the idea that another might succeed where he had failed, remarked sneeringly,

"You would best hurry, or this Jesus may have to call the dead to life; and you will hardly expect him to do that."

Jairus gave him an indignant look, but hurried out of the room without replying. Ammihud himself did not withdraw, but stood watching the still, unconscious form. By the bedside sat the mother, bowed with anguish, and Thisoa too kept her place there. She felt that the end was near, and harrowing though it was to see the innocent life come to a close, she was not willing to go away. A believer now in Jesus' power to heal, she fervently longed for his coming. Yet she had little hope that he would come in time. Naomi was plainly breathing her last.

Very soon she did breathe her last. The breaths grew fainter and shorter. Consciousness coming for a moment at the very end, she opened her eyes, recognized her mother and Thisoa and smiled upon them; and then, with one long sigh

as if she were too weary to live longer, passed quietly away.

"She is dead," said Ammihud unfeelingly. "Jesus is not wanted here. I will find Jairus and tell him so."

Thereupon he hastily departed and Thisoa and the mother were left alone with the dead child. Putting her arms about the sorrowing woman, Thisoa kissed her tenderly and then withdrew. Such grief was too sacred to be shared, too deep to call for barren words of consolation.

In the room without she found a group of wailing relatives and friends. Ammihud had told them the sad news and their lamentation was loud and unrestrained after the oriental fashion. They beat their breasts and expressed their grief by tears and distressful cries. Neither decorous nor considerate did their actions seem to Thisoa. She felt that the noise they made must be disturbing to the heart-broken mother within; and she felt too that the mantle of silence should enfold the form that was lying silent and still. But she made no protest. It would have only called forth angry words and unfriendly glances. Some of the relatives there were near ones, and they were already jealous of Thisoa because she had been with Naomi in her last moments while they had been kept away. So she waited for a short time quietly in the hope that there might be some service for her still to render. Then making up her mind that she was out of place there, she approached the street door to go to her own home.

As she did so she heard steps outside; the door was gently opened and Jairus entered followed by several men. On the foremost of these her eyes were at once riveted. Imperfect had been the glimpse she got of Jesus when she stood at the edge of the gathering in the streets and had heard him utter those sorrowing words of condemnation upon the unrepentant; yet the tender and benignant face she had vividly remembered and she recognized it now. Yes, this was Jesus of

Nazareth, and never had she seen mien so calm or a presence that carried with it such a sense of peace.

That he had come too late, she knew. That he could give back the life that had already flown, she felt to be impossible. Yet somehow hope sprang up at once in her heart, and that Jairus too had hope was plain. He did nothing but look to the man who had listened to his pleading and had come to his house in its hour of desolation. But there was gladness in his eyes, though he knew that his child was dead. That he knew it, Thisoa could not doubt: for Ammihud was one of those who had followed him into the house. He had found the bereaved father and had told him it was useless to ask for help, for the end had come. Even now the physician's face betrayed the same lack of human feeling that he had manifested at the bedside. It was almost an expression of triumph that it wore. He himself had failed. They would all soon see that the failure had been inevitable and that to look for aid was folly.

Even so did it seem to the sorrowing relatives and friends. The entrance of the master of the house had only made them wail the louder and sob more brokenly. They must make their grief and sympathy apparent to the father of the lifeless child. It was what he would expect from them. So to him rather than to those who had come in with him their eyes were directed. For him their noisy and passionate grief was shown. But in the height of it they were startled by a quiet yet commanding voice which said,

"Why make ye this ado and weep? The maid is not dead but is asleep."

But upon the mourners the presence of Jesus had not made the impression it had upon the mind of Thisoa. They had scarcely noticed him. He had raised no hopes in them. His words only roused their scorn. Without heeding them further Jesus went into the room where the body of Naomi lay. With him went her mother, who had come from within, and Jairus. Three men who had followed him and were plainly of his dis-

ciples went in also. No others were allowed to enter. Anmi-hud attempted to do so but Jairus motioned him back. Intently Thisoa watched everything that was taking place. Intently she observed every look and gesture of this man whose power it would now seem was not limited to healing, but who did not shrink from the task of giving life back to the dead. What calm authority he exercised. Whence came it? This son of a humble toiling woman was not a king that he should be obeyed.

In tense expectancy she waited. Presently the door of the inner room was opened. Forth from it came Jesus and his three followers. No word did he speak. Neither to right nor left did he look. In his countenance there was nothing to read but that deep serenity that was like a benediction. Through the outer door he passed with his faithful three, and as he disappeared Thisoa had a strange feeling that something higher and purer than the things of earth had gone with him.

But her attention was at once demanded by Naomi's mother who now entered the room with a radiant face. To the volley of inquiries that was directed at her she answered joyfully,

"Yes, she lives. But do not hinder me. Jesus charged me to give her something to eat."

VIII

Our modern age claims much for itself. Its progress has been so amazing that it enters with difficulty into the life and spirit of the past. By countless inventions we have made living a fine art. How dreary then must existence have been two thousand ears ago! Our scientific achievement is so vast that Archimedes was a dabbler. The landscape architect makes us think lightly of the hanging gardens of Babylon. Awed by the sublimity of towering mountains and grand canyons, we say that the ancients were blind to scenic beauty. Yet the men and women of the old time civilizations had the same senses, the same minds and the same emotions that we have today. How could they have been insensible to soft vernal airs, delicious sunshine, sunset clouds, the fragrant breath of morning, and waters mirroring heaven or crested by the gale? If the craving for the wild and picturesque is a modern feeling, nature must yet have had her lovers in the days of old. Sophocles was not the only one who delighted in her moods of varied beauty. They appealed to myriads; they gave rest and inspiration to the Son of Man. Surely it was not merely to lose sense of human turmoil that He sought the mountain solitudes to meditate and pray. Those lonely vigils under the solemn stars revealed to Him the nearness of the Eternal Creative Mind. He felt it in the cooling night wind, in the sighing forests, in the grateful veil of darkness and in the singing birds that joyfully greeted the dawn.

To Thisoa nature had always spoken with a winning voice. She loved the flowers; she loved the birds; she loved to see hills and valleys glowing in the sunlight or shadowed by passing clouds. In her childhood she had lived close to the sea and its tumbling waters were an unending joy to her. She would clap her hands in delight when the winds made its billows break with a thunderous roar upon the shore. In Ca-

pernaum she missed its salty breezes and its misty vastness; but the Lake of Galilee offered a charming prospect and she never tired of watching the endlessly changing lights upon its surface. She could see it from her father's house; but not far away was a quiet spot which commanded its whole expanse and to which she loved to resort. An aged olive tree with its dull green foliage and its twisted trunk of gleaming gray helped to make the spot attractive. It was very old and, in rooting itself securely against windy tempests, it had divided its big stem into those great clawlike protuberances that seem to clutch the earth into which they sink. Between two of these Thisoa had found a comfortable resting place; and here she would sit in the shade of the protecting foliage and read or gaze upon the stretch of water so often swept by gusts from the surrounding hills. Often she wondered how the tree came there, standing all alone as it did, and how many years it had faced the breezes and sunk its roots ever deeper into the soil. And it made her think too of the story told in her own land, of Athene's bounty in bestowing this priceless gift on the violet crowned city that she loved and thereby making the grateful Athenians adopt her as their patron deity.

To this spot Thisoa repaired with Naomi a few days after her friend had been miraculously called back from the dead. She came in a troubled mood. Ever since that strange mysterious happening her mind had been in a turmoil. One question imperiously challenged her through all her waking hours. Was Jesus of Nazareth the true leader and deliverer of his people? Whenever she was alone she found this problem confronting her and refusing to be set aside. Almost did she dread to be alone because of this burden to her thoughts. So she had welcomed Naomi when she appeared that day, and had brought her with her to this favorite resort where she would have preferred to be solitary in many of her moods.

But she had now a vague unreasoning feeling that a child's wisdom might give light to her sorely buffeted understanding.

It was all because of Zatthu that her spirit was in such turmoil. This man of Nazareth had not claimed her allegiance. Whether or not she should believe in him without reserve she did not for her own sake have to decide without delay. Yet for Zatthu's sake she did. She had encouraged him to believe that he was to deliver Israel. Jesus, she had said to him, was but for a day. "When generations have passed, the mothers of Israel will bless you because their babes can breathe the air of freedom." How vividly those words she had spoken on the night of Zatthu's departure now came back to her! And she could not be mistaken. Her heart told her insistently, imperiously, that her faith in Zatthu could not have been misplaced. And yet Jesus of Nazareth was ever assuming a grander and more commanding aspect in her eyes. To open the soul to his teachings and his gracious influence might be in itself a joy. But to cast Zatthu down and raise Jesus above him — ah, that would bring agony of spirit.

And could the maid of twelve give her any help in this hour of trial? She did not really think it. Yet Naomi was no longer the child she had been. She seemed to have brought back an awakened understanding from the unknown world whose borders she had crossed. Her doll Rachel was her favorite playmate no longer.

"Naomi," said Thisoa as they sat down under the olive tree together, "this is the first chance I have had to talk with you since you were sick, and so very, very sick. You know, I suppose, how ill you really were."

"Yes," said Naomi, quite soberly. "I was so ill that I died."

"How did you know that, Naomi? Just because they told you?"

"No. I saw things — lights and faces. But I couldn't say any more about it."

“Why not, Naomi?”

“Something tells me that I shouldn’t. When I played with Rachel and made her Queen Esther, I used to say to her, ‘You are very grand now. You are a queen and you live in a palace. But I am just going to peek in and see how splendid you are, though I haven’t any right to be in the palace at all.’ Now it is just that way about what happened when I died. I belong here. I don’t belong over there where we all go when we die. I just peeked in and I don’t feel as if I had any right to talk about what I saw. And I really didn’t see very much. You know I was dead only just a little while.”

“Only a little while, dear Naomi, but long enough to make us very sad. We should have missed you so if you had not come back to us.”

“And I should have missed you and mother and father. I am sure Jehovah would have taken good care of me and sent some very dear angels to look after me. But I don’t see how they could have been as dear as mother and father and you.”

“I suppose they have told you how it was that you did come back to us.”

“Oh, I didn’t need to be told. I knew. I heard some one call to me and tell me to rise, and I had to do it. It wasn’t easy. I had hard work to open my eyes. But I did so, and I saw a man standing by my bed and looking at me. And oh, such a beautiful face he had! Do you know, it was like the faces I saw when I was dead! I haven’t said that to any one else, but I don’t see how there can be any harm in my telling it to you.”

“No harm at all, I am sure. But why was the face at your bedside like the faces you saw when you went away from us?”

“Because it was very kind — and yet it wasn’t only that. I don’t think I could really tell you just why.”

“You know who it was that brought you back to us?”

“Oh, yes. It was Jesus of Nazareth.”

“Don’t you want to see him again?”

"More than any thing else in the world. One who can do the wonderful things he does wouldn't want a little girl like me to trouble him. But if I should see him, I should run and kneel down before him and say, 'O Jesus, it was very good of you to give me back to my mother and father and I thank you with all my heart.' "

"I am sure that wouldn't trouble him, Naomi. It would please him. Didn't he gladly take the trouble to come to your father's house and bring you back to life? But why should you kneel down to him?"

"Why, I just couldn't help it. He is so wonderful. You know I shouldn't be talking with you here now if it hadn't been for him."

"Don't your people think it is wrong to kneel to any one but Jehovah?"

"Yes. Mother has taught me that."

"You don't think he is Jehovah, do you?"

"I don't see how he could be. Perhaps it would be wrong to kneel to him. But I don't believe I could help it if I saw him."

Thisoa ceased questioning and looked out on the gleaming waters. Naomi's talk affected her strangely. What weight ought she to give to these impressions of a mere child? A mere child! She looked at the little girl as she thus characterized her in her thought; and as she did so a strange sentence in the Hebrew prophecies flashed into her mind. "And a little child shall lead them." And then there came to her the recollection of what Jesus' mother had told about his childhood. Did knowledge come to the minds of children which their elders did not understand? If so, did it come because the child mind was simple and given to reverence like that of her little friend Naomi? She wondered. She asked herself if the sharp conflict in her mind ought not to have some easy and natural ending. Perhaps hard thinking wasn't always the best way to find the truth. She was tormenting

herself by her fierce persistent struggle to form a clear just judgment. Would it sometime form itself as simply as Naomi's feeling that she must kneel to the man of Nazareth?

While she still wondered and questioned, she heard Naomi speak and for the time being dismissed this puzzling querying from her mind. It was a relief to be called back from brooding and speculation to the things of the moment.

"Thisoa, have I been a trouble to you?" inquired Naomi. "You have not looked at me or spoken to me for some time."

"No, Naomi dear. You have been a help and comfort to me. But let us go home now. We have talked enough for one morning."

They left the lakeside and Thisoa sought her own home after first accompanying Naomi to hers. But she did not dismiss from her thoughts what the child had said. The questioning mood returned and she could not banish it. When night came it still followed her, and after all others in the house were asleep she wandered into the garden enclosure and stood at the very spot where Zathu had been so effectively concealed. The stars were dim for the sky was partially overcast. Looking up at them, she felt that their misty light was but a symbol of her own sorely vexed and groping mind. All the light she saw was uncertain and faint. Yearning, passionate, stricken with a sense of her own helplessness, she threw herself on her knees and stretched out her hands to the veiled and cloudy sky.

"O Thou," she cried, "who didst make the stars and all who live under them, hearken to one who is wandering in a wilderness and can find no help, no guide. Whether thy name be Jehovah or a name too great and high for men to know, be Thou the friend of all those Thou hast created and be Thou merciful to me. Give light to me in my darkness and give strength to him who would set thy chosen people free. Wherever he is tonight, be near him and put courage in his heart. If he is needy, minister to him. If he is sick, give

him healing. If he has no shelter, make the winds and the night dews kind to him. And if his spirit is fainting, lift it up and make him know that his cause is righteous in thine eyes and Thou wilt not let it fail."

Comforted by this appeal and feeling that, even though she knew not how, it must have been heard, she sought repose. But it was not at once that sleep came to her.

IX

"Thisoa, would you like to go with me to Nazareth?"

Such was the unlooked for question Naarah put to her friend a few days after the talk with Naomi by the lakeside. Thisoa was at Naarah's house. Almost every day she went there to find relief from her own restlessness. Naarah's warm steady affection and ready sympathy gave her cheer and comfort.

"To Nazareth?" said Thisoa. "Then you are going to see your grandfather, Eliud Merari."

"Yes. It is some three months since I have visited him. I know he is longing to see me."

"And Nazareth is the place where Jesus had his home. Yes, I should be glad to go with you to Nazareth. But you have been there again and again. Why have you never asked me before?"

"Every thing has to have a beginning," replied Naarah with an odd look.

"True. But why does this particular beginning come at this particular time?"

"I thought you might like to see and know my grandfather. You have become interested in our Sacred Books and no one knows them better than he. And then Nazareth is right among the hills of Galilee. Perhaps we may hear something of Zatthu; and both of us, you know, would be very glad to learn if his plans are making any headway."

It did not escape Naarah's notice that Thisoa flushed a little at the mention of Zatthu; but the answer that came betrayed no eagerness or perturbation.

"Both reasons are good. You have well justified that beginning you have made. When do you go?"

"Tomorrow. The journey takes only one day. We shall stop three days and then return."

"Tomorrow. I shall be ready tomorrow. I would start today if you wished it."

"It is arranged for tomorrow. There will be quite a little company. Marcus sends three or four soldiers to protect me. I laugh at him for it, but he won't let me go without them."

"How old is your grandfather, Naarah?"

"He is eighty-three."

"And well?"

"A little broken. My marriage with Marcus hurt him. He approved of it heartily. But the fact that he allowed it made him lose influence with men who are, like himself, learned in the Law."

"But your people have not turned from you, and your happiness must have been a comfort to him."

"A very great comfort, but for all that his pride has been wounded. No, my people have turned from me very little. That is due to Marcus. He has treated them wisely and generously and they think it a wonderful triumph that he, a Roman officer, should have adopted our faith. But my grandfather would never live with Marcus and me because he was afraid the Hebrews here in Capernaum might hold aloof from me more than they do if he did so. He reasoned that his presence here would rouse their animosity, because they would blame him for my marriage, knowing he could have stopped it if he had chosen."

"Could he have stopped it, Naarah?"

"Now there speaks the youthful generous mind that believes that no power on earth should keep apart two who truly love each other. It is a beautiful thought. Cling to it, Thisoa dear. May you never have to give it up."

"But you haven't answered my question."

"No, and I didn't mean to: yet I will. I could not have married Marcus if my grandfather had been opposed to it. I owed him too much to hurt or wound him. But, oh! no one was ever so happy as I was when I found he really wished it

to be. He said it was Jehovah's will and he could not but acquiesce."

The next day the two set out for Nazareth with the escort Marcus insisted on providing. The six stalwart soldiers who made their bodyguard were on foot. Naarah after the custom of the country, rode upon an ass; but Thisoa was mounted upon a spirited horse which with difficulty she held back to the slow pace of the ass and the foot soldiers. When she was a young girl her father had for reasons of trade spent two successive summers in Macedonia with his wife and daughter. There horses were plentiful and there she had learned to be a thoroughly fearless rider. Since that time she had had scant opportunity to gratify her love of horsemanship, but the love remained. She knew no keener pleasure than that of mounting and controlling a mettlesome steed.

They made a very early start, for the break of day found them setting forth upon their journey. Naarah had said they could make Nazareth in a single day, but to do this they had to be many hours upon the road. Nazareth was not more than twenty miles from Capernaum; but the detours made necessary to the traveller by the windings of the road along the lakeside and among the hills made the journey one little short of thirty miles.

A pleasant journey it was however, as it lay through a pleasant country. It was an early day in Bul, much the same as November in the Roman calendar, on which the two friends and their escort started. The early rains had cleared the air; and as they were favored with a cloudless sky, they could enjoy the clear outlines of the hills and the sunshine that flooded the lake and the whole surrounding country.

For a number of miles — nearly half of the whole distance they were to cover — the road skirted the Lake of Galilee, on whose gleaming surface were to be seen the sails of numerous fishing boats and small vessels of merchandise that plied between the cities on the shore. An hour before noon they

reached the city of Tiberias and here they turned away from the lake and faced the line of hills upon its western border. Upward their way wound now until it carried them through a cleft between two spurs of the ridge and brought them down into one of the reaches of the beautiful valley of Esdraelon.

Here, by the clear cool waters of a brook, they found an inviting grove of plane trees and willows and took a midday rest. The sun's rays had become oppressive and for five full hours they had steadily pursued their way.

Duly refreshed they started on again when the sun was lower, and now for a time they passed through fertile lowlands where the sturdy peasants were sowing the fields just ploughed after being softened by the autumn rains. Again, as they began to climb once more, they found themselves among olive groves and saw the gatherers busily at work.

More rugged grew the ascent and after a time they reached high ground which commanded a wide sweep of the surrounding country. And the scene was a goodly one. Even without its associations it might well fascinate the beholder's eye. Below was the whole expanse of the plains of Esdraelon. Through the openings in the hills made by the water courses the low-lying Jordan valley, though not the river itself, could be descried. Near and far mountain peaks grew visible — Hermon, the mightiest of them, capped with snow.

"All this is wonderfully fair to look upon," said Thisoa; "but I am a Greek girl and all that I see in the prospect is its beauty. To you, Naarah, no doubt it shows that which thrills you as I was once thrilled, when I stood with my father on the Acropolis at Athens and looked down on the Straits of Salamis where my countrymen routed the stately Persian fleet."

"Yes," answered Naarah. "I see places which tell of my people's past. That wooded mountain range to the southwest is Carmel, where Elijah, one of our greatest prophets, had his home and wrought many wondrous things. From the

slopes of Tabor, that rounded summit not far to the south-east of us, Barak, at Deborah's bidding, went down with his ten thousand to lay low the hosts of Sisera. To the right of it, but much farther distant, is Mount Gilboa, where our great King Saul and his sons were slain fighting the Philistines. That which moves me most however is the Jordan valley. Even though I cannot discern the river itself, I love to think how its waters divided to let our sacred Ark pass through and stood like a wall till God bade them flow again. Truly there is no God but Jehovah."

Naarah seemed to lose all thought of her friend as her mind dwelt upon the older days and the miracles then wrought. And Thisoa too found her own mood a contemplative one.

"The waters stood as a wall till God bade them flow again," she repeated slowly. "Believing things like that, no wonder Zatthu thinks the Jehovah he worships will work wonders once again for His own people. But will He? Ah, if one could but feel sure!"

X

Continuing on their way they passed through Cana without knowing of the miracle that had been wrought there, and late in the afternoon they got sight of Nazareth. It was just before sundown that they drew near to the house where Naarah's grandfather lived with his niece Rebekah.

Merari saw them coming. He was enjoying the genial autumn sunshine on the housetop which has ever served as porch or piazza in oriental lands. His eye was not dim though his natural strength was abated. He recognized Naarah when she was still distant, rose and held out his arms prayerfully as if his welcome were a blessing. Venerable and majestic, he seemed almost transfigured by the sunlight that fell full upon his face; and this first glimpse of him always lingered in Thisoa's memory. As her eye rested upon him she could not but think of the patriarchs and prophets who figure so grandly in the Hebrew story.

When they all arrived at the house, the soldiers took charge of the two beasts of burden and made their way to an inn that was maintained in the village. Merari, who had come below, then greeted Naarah with a warmth that touched Thisoa deeply. Long he held her in his arms and fondled her as if she were a child, stroking her hair caressingly and saying over and over again that Jehovah was very good to him to let him see her once more. How much he had sacrificed in living away from her, Thisoa could not but realize.

"And the little ones," he presently said, "are they both well?"

"As healthy and well as ever children were, dear grandfather."

"Yet you never get through a night without getting up to look after them, I am sure."

"Perhaps not many nights, grandfather."

"You would not be like your mother were it otherwise. She was a good woman and a devoted mother. And Marcus too is well?"

"Quite well and still the best husband in all the world."

"For that, praise be to Jehovah. He guided me rightly when I gave you to him, Roman though he was. Here in my own country that act has cost me much. But no matter! No matter! I have my reward a hundred fold in your happiness.

"But whom have we here?" he inquired, now giving his attention to Thisoa. "Old though I am, I should be courteous. This gracious lady will pardon me, I am sure, if in my eagerness to hear of those who are dearest to me, I ignored her for a moment."

Thisoa frankly met the old man's kindly gaze. Too dauntless of spirit to be abashed in any presence, she yet had a feeling of awe as she faced this noble and imposing figure. She had never seen any one like him before in her own or in any other land. The years seemed to have weighted him with dignity and honor. Here surely was one whose every word had been true, whose every action worthy, whose every thought unsoiled. And in the instant it flashed upon her that just once she had looked into a face that had filled her with even a deeper reverence and wonder. When the carpenter's son had entered the house of the stricken Jairus, she had then caught such an expression of tenderness, and yet of majesty too, that her very soul was moved. Was this man, whose whole being spoke nobility, like Jesus of Nazareth?

Her mind filled with such thoughts, she had not her usual serenity and self-possession as Merari turned to her and greeted her. She acknowledged his courtesy only by a smile and a slight obeisance, but Naarah spoke for her and said,

"This is my very dear friend Thisoa, the daughter of the Greek merchant Aristarchus. Next to you and Marcus and the children she is the one I care for most. And that is enough to make you care for her too, is it not, dear grandfather?"

"Enough and more than enough," replied Merari going with slow and stately step to Thisoa and clasping her hand warmly in both his own. "Any friend of my granddaughter's is a friend of mine. But even without such recommendation you would be welcome. The laws of hospitality are sacred, and do not our revered Commandments bid us apply them to the stranger that is within our gates?"

Thisoa could not speak for a moment. So touched was she by the old man's graciousness that she felt like kneeling at his feet and asking for a blessing. For his long flowing beard and his hair, abundant though snowy white, seemed to call for homage rather than to betoken feebleness; his tall commanding figure was slightly bent, but his step was firm; and his eyes had lost none of their lustre.

Profoundly moved, Thisoa made the deepest obeisance she could without actually kneeling. Then she stood erect and looked into the eyes that were gazing at her with a rare light of kindness.

"You do me great honor," she said. "You have lived long; you have studied deeply; you have won the esteem of the best and the wisest men. It is more than kind of you to call an ignorant maid like me a friend."

"You say truly that I have lived long. I am a very old man and this is the best lesson my years have taught me — that the truest wisdom comes from a pure and loving heart."

"Yet you will teach me, will you not? There are things that Naarah and I would so gladly learn of you."

"All that I know is yours. But I know so little. Jehovah has humbled me and I thank him for it."

The next day came a conference, if conference it could be called, in which Naarah and Thisoa drew from the old man his most deeply cherished and sacred convictions. Freely did he give them. He was as humble as a child. He would have listened to Naarah or to Thisoa with entire respect. If either of them had differed with him, he would have said at

once that his mind was weakened by old age and that very likely he was wrong. And as he talked on Thisoa saw that Naarah had been correct in saying he was a little broken. The garb of mortality, though far from outworn, seemed to be growing thin and almost transparent. Looking away from men and all their engrossing activities, he saw with ever clearer vision the things beyond the veil. For the veil was no longer thick and obscuring. He was seeing through it and beyond it into eternity.

It was he however that opened the way to the very outpouring of thought for which Naarah and Thisoa longed.

"What is it that you wish to learn from me?" he inquired of Thisoa in a very gentle voice.

"We were wondering," she said, "if you had met or heard of a man named Zatthu who hopes to free your nation from the Romans. Naarah and I both saw him in Capernaum where he was a guest in my father's house. We are both much interested in his plan and hope very earnestly for his success."

"He was a guest in your father's house and your father a Greek merchant?"

"Yes, and he was in great peril there. With difficulty he escaped from the Romans, but anxious though we have been to know how he has fared, we have had no word from him since."

"Your father was generous to give him shelter. Yes, I have seen him. He has been in Nazareth. More than once he came and spent an hour with me."

"And told you of all the great things he would do for Israel?" Naarah asked.

"Yes. That was his theme."

"And could you believe in him? Could you give him support and encouragement?" inquired Thisoa eagerly.

"It is Jehovah's aid that he seeks, not mine."

"No, yours," replied Naarah; "yours above that of every one. You have studied our Books so deeply. You know them

so well. Do they not give countenance to his great faith in Jehovah? Could you not tell him so?"

The words that Merari now uttered did not seem to come as a direct answer to Naarah's eager question. The ancient prophecies he knew by heart. It was in their language that he now began to speak upon the future of his people and upon those who were scheming or working for their welfare. It was as a seer with open vision that he spoke. Not gropingly, but quickly and instinctively he found the words that voiced his inward feeling. From the rich and glowing imagery of the Psalms or from Isaiah's sublime phrases he selected them as if he were inspired; and they were poured from his lips like prophetic annunciations over which he had no control. Sometimes he spoke them with kindling eye and in thrilling tones; sometimes with simple, grave solemnity, as even now he said,

"Let Israel hope in Jehovah; for with Jehovah there is mercy and with Him there is plenteous redemption."

"And that is exactly what Zatthu thinks," exclaimed Naarah. "He believes it is only because Israel does not turn to Jehovah that He allows her to be trodden under the foot of Rome."

"Thus saith Jehovah," continued Merari in the same quiet and solemn tones, "Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom."

"Then you think Zatthu is perhaps too confident? That he lets himself believe his own burning hope is really Jehovah's voice?"

Merari shook his head sadly and replied,

"We wait for light, but behold obscurity; for brightness, but we walk in darkness. We grope for the wall like the blind, and we grope as if we had no eyes: we stumble at noon-day as in the night; we are in desolate places as dead men."

Thisoa's heart sank within her as these words were said. There was a dismaying finality in them. Vainly did her pas-

sionate longing for Zattu's triumph make her say to herself that these were but the outpourings of an aged and broken mind. Merari's intellect was not clouded. His very nearness to the immortal country seemed to give him the open vision. The words that fell from such lips almost carried conviction.

Thisoa's feelings were largely shared by Naarah. The two sat in silence for a time and Merari seemed lost in thought. Then Naarah said,

"That verse you quoted from the Psalms tells us that with Jehovah there is mercy and plenteous redemption. Will He never redeem Israel?"

"Break forth into joy, sing together, ye waste places of Jerusalem; for Jehovah hath comforted his people, he hath redeemed Jerusalem. Jehovah hath made bare His holy arm in the eyes of all the nations; and all the ends of the earth shall see the salvation of our God."

"Ah, but when shall this be?" exclaimed Naarah. "Our people have waited so long."

"And who," said Thisoa, "is to rise up and work their deliverance if not Zattu?"

"Behold," was the answer, "a king shall reign in righteousness and princes shall rule in judgment, and a man shall be as an hiding-place from the wind and a covert from the tempest; as rivers of water in a dry place, as the shadow of a great rock in a weary land."

"But who," pursued Thisoa, "will be this man, and how shall he be known? Surely that mild healer from this very Nazareth of yours cannot accomplish this great and wonderful thing. Surely it is not in *him* to lift a nation up from bondage into liberty and strength."

"Do you mean Jesus?"

"Yes, Jesus the carpenter's son."

At the name a strange and far-off look came into Merari's eyes. He was as one seeing a vision, and in seeing it he was filled with prophetic fire. Those haunting mysterious utter-

ances of the ancient seers now revealed to him their glorious meaning. A great light flooded his spirit. He was rapt, and he spoke as if an angel had loosened his tongue and opened his eyes to see beyond the obscurities of sense and time.

“Behold,” he began, “my servant whom I uphold; mine elect in whom my soul delighteth. I have put my spirit upon him; he shall bring forth judgment to the Gentiles. He shall not cry nor lift up, nor cause his voice to be heard in the street. A bruised reed shall he not break, and the smoking flax shall he not quench; he shall bring forth judgment unto truth.

“And there shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a Branch shall grow out of his roots: and the spirit of Jehovah shall rest upon him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and of the fear of Jehovah.”

And then it seemed as if the vision took a sombre shape, for his face clouded a little and it was with awed and subdued tones that he continued,

“Who is this that cometh from Edom, with dyed garments from Bosrah? This that is glorious in his apparel, travelling in the greatness of his strength? I that speak in righteousness, mighty to save.

“Wherefore art thou red in thine apparel and thy garments like him that treadeth in the winefat? I have trodden the winepress alone; and of the people there was none with me; for I will tread them in mine anger and trample them in my fury; and their blood shall be sprinkled upon my garments, and I will stain all my raiment.

“He hath no form nor comeliness; and when we shall see him, there is no beauty that we should desire him. He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief; and we hid as it were our faces from him; he was despised and we esteemed him not. Surely he hath borne our griefs and carried our sorrows; yet we did

esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed."

And here the cloud passed. The face brightened; the voice grew exultant; the old man was lifted into ecstasy by the glories now revealed.

"Arise, shine," he cried triumphantly, "for thy light is come and the glory of Jehovah is risen upon thee. For behold, darkness shall cover the earth and gross darkness the people: but Jehovah shall rise upon thee, and his glory shall be seen upon thee. And the Gentiles shall come to thy light and kings to the brightness of thy rising.

"And they shall build up the wastes, they shall raise up the former desolations, and they shall repair the waste cities, the desolations of many generations.

"And the ransomed of Jehovah shall return and come to Zion with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads; they shall obtain joy and gladness and sorrow and sighing shall flee away.

"The earth shall be full of the knowledge of Jehovah, as the waters cover the sea."

Merari ceased. The light faded slowly from his face and a look of weariness came over it. The uplift of the spirit had taxed the worn aged body. His eyes closed and he sank into a gentle peaceful slumber. For some time he slept while Naarah and Thisoa sat in silence. By looks which they exchanged they showed to each other how powerfully they had been swayed by the old man's prophetic mood and by the borrowed words which had flowed as freely and aptly from his tongue as if he himself and not Isaiah had been inspired to utter them. They had indeed no wish to speak. Merari had given them deep questions to ponder over. In Naarah's mind there was the wondering query how the shackles that galled her people could be broken by the carpenter's son. To Thisoa

the question took inevitably a painfully personal shape. If Jesus was to be Israel's redeemer, what of Zatthu? Was he to become broken-hearted in pushing a hopeless cause?

To neither questioner did any full light come. Speech therefore became necessary after they had brooded for a time over their perplexing problems. In low tones they talked while Merari slumbered on. Soon after sundown he awoke and all went below.

XI

The following day found Merari in a very quiet mood. He was little inclined to talk. Naarah ventured to ask him if those words he had poured forth from the ancient prophecies really expressed his sober convictions; but his answer came briefly and reluctantly.

"It is hardly for me to say," was his reply. "Jehovah surely spoke through me then. The words must be true. How true and when, let the future show."

"You saw Jesus when he lived here, did you not?" asked Thisoa.

"Yes, many times."

"As you talked with him did he seem to you like a king who was to reign?"

"When Samuel saw the sons of Jesse he would have anointed Eliab; but it was David of whom Jehovah said, 'Arise, anoint him; for this is he.'"

They felt that nothing would come of further questioning. The old man had given them his best wisdom. Like him they must let the future show its worth.

The day after they wended their way back to Capernaum. Again they travelled under a cloudless sky, and the valley of Esdraelon was as fair as ever; but its beauty did not now strongly appeal to them. Almost did the light that rested on meadows, hills and streams seem pale, as of a sun in partial eclipse. Their eyes were not free to see because their minds were full and their interests were deeply and absorbingly human. Still were they brooding over the sublime and thrilling words which Merari had poured forth when the spirit of prophecy had been roused in him. So the two conversed sparingly and quietly as they journeyed homeward.

Not sorry were they when their eyes were again greeted by the blue waters of Galilee. They were still many miles

from Capernaum, but it spoke to them of home. Not a few sails were to be seen upon it. How freely and joyously they seemed to move! The sight broke for a moment the spell that had rested upon them.

"Look, Thisoa!" cried Naarah. "How gracefully those vessels glide along! Does it seem as if they could ever be the sport of the winds and struggle frantically with angry towering waves?"

"Is there anything that isn't seeming?" answered Thisoa. "Change, change, change! Calm and then storm! Sunshine and then cloud! Hope and then disappointment! Joy and then sorrow! Youth and then old age! Life and then death! What is stable? What is lasting?"

"Love."

"How do you know?"

"My heart tells me so. Yours will sometime say the same."

Alas! this was the message Thisoa's heart wished to whisper to her, but it could not do so. The deep longing that was in it had not been fed. The thrill of joy it coveted never came. When Naarah had suggested that their journey to Nazareth might bring them tidings of Zatthu, Thisoa could not help hoping that it might be so; and at Merari's house she had indeed got word of him, but a meagre and unsatisfying word it had been. So it was not without a sinking of heart that she had set forth on the homeward journey. She was turning away from the hills into which Zatthu had fled for refuge and in the fastnesses of which he might even then be concealed. Perhaps he had been pursuing his end while they were there. But she could discover nothing. She could only go down to her home by the lakeside while he and his doings were wrapped in mystery. But it was to him as much as to the utterances of Merari that her thoughts had been turning as they followed the winding road that led down to Tiberias and then on by the border of the lake.

Naturally she did not find it in her to comment on Naarah's

answer to her own question. So they rode on again in silence till they found themselves nearing their own homes.

"You have given me great pleasure, Naarah," said Thisoa, as the time came for them to part. "Your patriarchs and prophets must have been men like your grandfather. I shall think of him often."

"I am sure they were. I have revered him all my life, and more than ever now, when he seems almost to be looking into the world beyond."

Gladly, and yet with the spell of wonder and brooding still upon her, Thisoa approached her home. As she entered it a wild hope, prompted by mere longing sprang up in her heart, that in her absence some news of Zatthu might have come. Perhaps he himself was there and waiting to tell her his wondrous and exciting story. But the moment she saw her mother hope was shattered. Calmly, though with deep affection, Xenodice greeted her and as if nothing of interest had happened in Capernaum, and inquired eagerly about the aged Hebrew of whom she had so often heard. So Thisoa related her experiences with all the zest she could, though somehow they seemed strangely without interest to her now.

PART IV
THE BROKEN HOPE

I

With a deep joy in his heart Zatthu had joined Kelita and Shobek on the night of his escape from the house of Aristarchus and had fled under cover of the darkness. When morning broke he was safe in the hills that look down on the Lake of Galilee.

Yes, joy was in his heart. Jehovah had not forsaken him. Aliens had sheltered and cared for him even as the woman of Zarephath had nurtured Elijah. He was sure the meeting with the Greek merchant was divinely planned. How wonderful were the ways of the God of Israel! How glorious a thing it was to serve Him! And that he, Zatthu, should be called to this august and holy service of lifting the yoke of Israel! Yet doubtless he was called. Every thing that had happened since he was cast into prison at Cæsarea made him sure that it was so.

A little before sunrise Zatthu and his two comrades reached a rocky elevation that commanded the lake. Across its waters, which were already beginning to gleam in the growing light, they looked eastward to the hills of Gaulanitis. Above their rugged heights the sky soon reddened. The lake immediately caught the hue and grew crimson as the sun neared the horizon. The whole east was now aflame and the few thin vapory clouds that floated above the mountains but deepened the fiery glow. And in a few moments the sun itself, not with the blaze of noonday but with dimmed and curtained splendor that was in keeping with the hush of morning, climbed into sight.

"Behold it," cried Zatthu stretching forth his arms. "It is even like a bridegroom coming out of his chamber and it rejoices like a strong man to run a race. And even so our own race shall be run. Let us be as unwearied as the sun and let us see in this glorious sight Jehovah's promise that our cause

is not to fail. When the hour to strike is come, He will in His own way make it known and the news will flash over all Judæa even as the light of the dawn has just overspread the sky. Hope, hope, hope! I see boundless hope in this flaming east that has sent its rays to the farthest dwellings of men. Let us go on our way with stout and rejoicing hearts. The end is sure."

With a feeling of elation they took a last look at the lake from which the red glow was rapidly fading and then plunged into a ravine that hid it from view. Coming soon to a hut that was plainly inhabited, they stopped. The sight of it brought a sense of hunger. While their minds were busy they had not thought of the body. Now they suddenly realized that it was many hours since they had eaten.

The hut was rude but it suggested comfort. It was staunch enough to resist wind and rain. Close to it were a shed for cattle and a sheepfold in which several sheep were to be seen. Within there ought to be enough for three hungry wayfarers. Zatthu went up to the door and knocked.

Shuffling steps were presently heard approaching it from within. It was partially opened and a woman of middle age looked questioningly at them. Her face was wrinkled and browned. Her hair was gray. Her figure had the stoop that is given by steady toil. In a bewildered way she gazed from one of them to another, but after a moment or two her eyes became fixed on Zatthu. She opened the door wide, stared at him intently, and as she did so an eager hopeful look came into her face. So curious was her manner that they waited for her to speak. She did so and said eagerly,

"Are you Jesus of Nazareth?"

"No," replied Zatthu, startled and far from pleased. "But why do you ask?"

"Because my husband is bed-ridden and I was hoping you could cure him. Oh, don't you believe you could? Just come inside and look at him."

Not knowing how to refuse, Zatthu stepped inside and Kelita and Shobek followed him. They found themselves in a long dimly lighted room which was plainly the whole interior of the lowly dwelling. It contained everything the daily wants of its humble occupants required.

At one end of it was a rude bed toward which the woman went, looking round beseechingly as she did so. Zatthu followed her. Somewhat doubtfully Kelita and Shobek did likewise, though keeping a little distance behind. As they drew near the bed they made out a form beneath the clothes and a head of thick matted gray hair, which, tangled and disarranged as it was, almost covered two bright eyes that gazed searchingly at them.

"There," said the woman, as she and Zatthu stood close beside the bed, "just look at him. He got wet through one cold day when he was hunting for a sheep that had strayed and he's been like this ever since. Three years ago that was, and he's had a dreadful lot of pain. It's hard on me too; for you see I have to look after the sheep and the two cows and take care of him besides. My brother's boy comes twice between every two Sabbaths to help me, or I wouldn't get along at all. Oh, couldn't you lay your hands on him and say a word and make him well?"

"Yes," said the man gazing up with a piteous entreating look. "Do heal me! I have been lying here so long, so long. I suffer so much and it hurts me to see my wife work so hard and I not able to lift a finger to help her."

In spite of himself Zatthu was moved. In spite of himself, because he was deeply annoyed at being mistaken for the man of Nazareth. Was it always to be thus? Was his path ever to be haunted by this son of a carpenter? But he controlled his indignation, looked pityingly at the man and said,

"Gladly would I help you if I could; but to heal those who are stricken is not in my power."

"But Jesus of Nazareth heals," said the woman. "Why couldn't you?"

"How do you know he heals?"

"Oh, they all say he does. They are all running after him, you know. And then he cured my cousin Amariah's wife of the palsy. They live over on the other side of the hills, not very far from Capernaum. One day Jesus drew near. The people gathered about him and he spoke to them and cured all those who were ailing. My cousin heard of it. He half led and half carried his wife to the spot. Mightily afraid he was when he got there that Jesus wouldn't see them, the people were all crowding so thick about him. He was just going to cry out so as to be noticed, when Jesus made the people stand aside and came and laid his hand on the poor palsied woman. You see, he knew somehow that she was there and needed help, and the help came. The moment he touched her, she knew she was well. And she was — just as well as you and I are. She told me all this herself; so I know."

The woman stopped speaking. She had been gazing intently into Zatthu's face all the time, and she realized after a while that he was not hearing her. It was true. The main fact told, he did not care for the details of the story. His mind was occupied by his own brooding resentment.

"Don't you believe what I say?" inquired the woman after a moment's pause.

"I am not of those who run after Jesus of Nazareth," was the reply. "I believe he is a menace to our nation."

Then he turned to Kelita and Shobek and said quickly before the woman could speak again,

"I think we would best be going. At some other place we will find what we are seeking."

While the woman stood wondering, he walked rapidly to the door and out into the open. Kelita and Shobek were close behind him. Silently they continued on their way through the ravine. Zatthu walked dejectedly, looking neither to

right nor left. Already the hope that had been kindled by the red glow of the sunrise had been dimmed.

They came to another peasant's dwelling ere a half hour had passed, and here they found the refreshment they desired. But Zatthu ate mechanically. He had lost his craving for food.

II

The next day the three adventurers — for such they may be called — reached Nazareth without meeting with any noteworthy experiences. They had proceeded slowly. They had studied and talked with people as they fell in with them. At Cana they had stopped for half a day and watched and observed. Was the temper that they found hostile to Rome? Would it kindle at the thought of driving this proud enemy out of the land? It hardly seemed so. Yet no searching tests were made. Zatthu did not pursue the quest with ardor. A cloud seemed to be upon his spirit. The plea of the bedridden shepherd and his wife was still chilling his enthusiasm.

He sought Nazareth because it had been the home of this carpenter's son who had become to him a stumbling block. Here Jesus had lived long. Here he could find out how this strange healer was regarded by those who knew him well. Surely the people of his own village could estimate him at his proper worth.

That they viewed Jesus with unfriendly eyes he soon found as he went freely among them. They had known him as a man of toil like themselves, and as blameless in his life. But the claim he made in their synagogue was blasphemous and had roused their indignation. What! he, who all these years had walked their streets, become suddenly the deliverer promised long ago! It was unthinkable! Still, there were some who would not judge and who advised Zatthu to seek Eliud Merari. This old Hebrew, so they said, was wise and learned. To be sure, he had allowed his granddaughter to marry a Roman; but the Roman had adopted their own faith and was accounted a good man. And Merari himself had always kept the Commandments and had at one time been much revered by the elders and scribes.

Zatthu opened his eyes wide at this mention of Marcus.

How his past kept staring at him! Were his experiences forming themselves into a chain that would always be fastened to him? No, that could hardly be. To think it, was to show distrust in Jehovah. But he would seek this old Hebrew about whom, as he now remembered, he had heard Aristarchus inquire and Marcus speak when he was listening to them in the little apartment adjoining his host's sick-room.

Going to the house where Merari lived, he was deeply impressed by his noble aspect, and he greeted him with profound respect.

"Almost," he said, "does it seem as if I stood in the presence of Samuel or Elijah, to each of whom the spirit of Jehovah was given in no common measure."

"Do not say it! Do not think it! they heard the voice of Jehovah. I am but as a little wandering child that would fain be guided to its home."

"But you are very wise. You know our Scriptures. You have lived in many lands. You know the minds of men. Gladly would I learn of you."

"I have nothing to give. Years ago I was proud of my knowledge. But God has humbled me. I grope in the dark and long for light."

"So I think our father Jacob and Moses himself would have spoken as their days were coming to an end. It is your lack of pride that makes me seek enlightenment from you. When you pondered over our ancient writings, surely they helped you to form some fixed beliefs. Those promises of our nation's redemption — when and how are they to be fulfilled?"

It was only after he had sat some time in silence, looking dreamily before him, that Merari answered,

"I do not know. Would that I did."

"And that Messiah who is to lift us into greatness — have you no idea when he will come and how?"

"Sometimes I think he is here now."

Well did Zathu understand who it was that the old man

had in mind. He understood and a feeling of bitterness rose in his heart. The Nazarenes he had previously talked with had for the most part spoken contemptuously of this man of toil who set up to be their promised saviour; but they were ignorant and common. He had come to this august and learned character to get a more discerning view. He could not be like the rabble who thought as their feelings bade them. Yet it seemed as if he were as blind as they. Thinking thus, it was with a tinge of resentment that he asked,

“How could that be? How could the promised Messiah appear and the people not be aware of it?”

“Did the people always see in Moses one whom God had sent?”

“That was long ago. We have been warned that this deliverer was to come. For many generations we have been on the watch for him.”

“And even as of old, we may be blind. We may be blind.”

“I do not believe we could be. But if you think the deliverer is here, you must be thinking of some man who is even now working the things that make for our deliverance. Who is the man?”

“Jesus the carpenter’s son who had his home here in Nazareth.”

“But he was thrust out from the synagogue here for blasphemy. He is stirring up and misleading the common people while he neglects our elders, our scribes, our Pharisees.”

Merari was still groping for light. It was in a very mildly protesting manner that he replied,

“I fear our Nazarenes were rash and misguided when they laid violent hands on Jesus. He is gentle and good and wise. More than once has he come here and talked with me. His spirit is reverent and holy. I cannot think he will do the people harm.”

“You are guileless and your years have left you kindly and trustful. I cannot be surprised that you think in this friendly

way of Jesus, though I could wish it were otherwise. For you do not understand. He is a mischief maker. By some strange, but surely some unholy art he cures diseases and gets the people on his side. He mingles with the coarse, the unclean and the defiling, and thus mocks at our sacred traditions. All this baser horde he fills with the idea that he is their leader and protector. But when the trumpet rings through Zion, will he make them obey its call? No, for he will be powerless to array them against Rome himself, and he has turned them away from the men of exalted rank and station whom the people should follow and obey."

"And is the trumpet soon to ring through Zion?"

"It surely will. Rome's hour has almost come."

"And the real deliverer — is he at hand?"

"I am convinced he is."

"His name?"

"It is not for me to name it. From Jehovah the call must come. When it does come, it will be as clearly heard as it was of old when Moses heard God speaking and Samuel listened to His voice in the stillness of the night."

"And the call will be a call to arms?"

"Yes, even as it was to Deborah, who made Barak fight against Sisera."

"I am very old. My soul shrinks from alarums, from warfare, from the thunder of the captains and the shouting. It turns rather to the gentle son of the carpenter who carries peace, not a sword, in his right hand and who, you tell me, heals the people of their ills. Hardly, it seems to me, will he thrust rudely away the heel of Rome that is bruising us: yet in some way, I know not now, I feel that he is to bring healing and deliverance to Israel."

"Again I say, it is your age, not the native strength of your spirit, that is speaking. When the Philistines oppressed our nation, the task of its leaders was to free them. It is the Romans who oppress them now, and some one will surely

be raised up to save them. When he is so raised up, the land will tremble, great deeds will be wrought, and our salvation will come with blood and flame."

"And are you yourself listening ever for the call? Are you the one who is to be raised up and become Israel's redeemer?"

"Jehovah only knows. If the call comes I shall heed it as promptly as the child obeys its father's voice."

Not much more was said. The two realized that they differed profoundly and upon a matter that touched their very souls. But their parting was friendly. Each respected the other and Merari was impressed by Zatthu's fervor even though he could not share it. A patriot himself, he could not listen unmoved to this younger man's burning patriotism.

To Zatthu the interview had been at once disturbing and inspiriting. He had been stirred to defend his own course and to pronounce Jesus a menace to the nation's weal. Yet it was not with a light and confident heart that he went away from this august figure that was like the prophets of old. Of all the men of his own people he had met and acquainted with his purpose, this was the one whose support and sympathy he would most gladly have secured. And the old man, devout, reverent, profoundly experienced yet humble as a child, paid homage to the carpenter's son! Zatthu was saddened as he thought of it. The strong faith that had flowed in like a tide when he justified himself to Merari now ebbed a little. But it must not ebb. Did David's weaken as he drew near Goliath? No, for had it done so, Jehovah would not have guided his arm and the stone would have missed its aim. He must be strong. He would find strength and he would find it from Him who gave it to the holy men of old.

Kelita and Shobek wondered what had become of their leader when night came and he did not appear. Midnight passed and failed to bring him. At dawn he came, but not as one worn and weary. He had spent the night under the stars

and to Him who made them his prayers had risen fervently and long. And though no vision of angels had come to him as it had come to Jacob, and no voice had spoken as it spoke to Moses, he doubted not that his petitions had been heard. He must wait Jehovah's time; but the time was sure to come. With a deep and uplifting trust he sought the dwelling that gave him shelter. Kelita and Shobek were watching and went forth to meet him joyfully. But the words they would have spoken did not fall from their lips. On his face was a rapt and joyous look that moved them to wonder. Surely Jehovah had raised this man up to do great things for Israel.

III

In a small village at the foot of Mount Tabor there was gathered a group of people as the sun was near its setting in the summer afternoon. Only two days have passed since Zatthu had talked with Merari in Nazareth. But it is to be remembered that it was late in Zif, or May, when Zatthu and his two faithful adherents fell in with Aristarchus; and all that happened to him in Capernaum took place in early Sivan, or June. It was still June when he fled into the Galilean mountains. As he stands now speaking to the throng that had collected about him, it was the glowing sun of June that shone full upon his face.

The bright light did not dazzle him. His eyes were turned away from it and the radiance only rested on him like a glory. To all who were listening to him it made him seem like a prophet. It gave his burning words an added fire. Rapt was the attention that they gave him. They were all of the peasant class and some of them were not of Hebrew blood. Yet in all alike the land that gave them home and harvest engendered a rude patriotism. They loved the soil they tilled and the meadows that fed their kine. That Rome, cruel, murderous Rome, should rule it was like an open sore.

And yet they were not warlike. When the tax-gatherer came, they grumbled; but their discontent was not deep enough to make them ready to face the Roman broadsword. For them the lowing herd, but not the trumpet's bray; the purple of the vineyard, but not the crimsoned field of battle; the noonday rest beneath the olive, but not the sleep that follows the gaping wound in the breast. Thrilled though they were by Zatthu's impassioned appeal, they held life precious. When he asked how many would heed the call to arms, no one responded. They were with him in thought and sympathy; in deed they would hold themselves aloof.

"You see what sheep they are," said Kelita disdainfully when the three were talking together an hour later. They were sitting under an ancient olive near the shepherd's hut that offered them rude but kindly hospitality. The sun had gone down. The stars were beginning to glimmer faintly. The evening breeze was refreshing after the glare of day and whispered consolation. Earth had an abiding strength, though man was frail. Stretched upon its quiet bosom Zatthu found peace and his heart still kept its courage.

"You wrong them," he answered calmly. "Not in a day does the sapling grow into the oak that can brave the blast. I am but watering the ground that gives its life to the forest. When the hour comes, the forest will stand up against the storm."

"A sapling may grow into a stout tree, but a sheep never turns into a lion."

"No, but their keeper, who is as a sheep when with his flock, will fight manfully with the ravaging wolf. These men are not cowards. When Jehovah's banner is unfurled, they will rally to it."

"There was one among them," declared Shobek, "who would hold aloof even though he heard the voice of Jehovah. Did you notice the short, thickset man, with small dark eyes and a cunning face, who stood on the edge of the group?"

"The group was so small that I recognize the man as you describe him. But I did not really mark him well."

"I did," said Kelita, "and I did not like his looks at all. There, I thought, is a man who would steal from his own father and mother."

"He has done things as bad as that," said Shobek. "I knew him in Cæsarea. In fact everybody knew him there or knew about him, he was such an evil doer."

"Why wasn't he put in prison or put to death?" inquired Zatthu. "Roman law is quick and vengeful."

"Just because he kept on the good side of the Romans.

He was one of their spies and they forgave him many things because of the dirty work he did for them."

"He can't be a Hebrew," said Kelita. "That evil face of his did not show the blood of our nation."

"No, he is of mixed blood, part Syrian, I think," answered Shobek.

"A spy, and not a Hebrew," observed Zatthu thoughtfully. "Then perhaps we ought to be on our guard against him. But what kind of things has he done?"

"I could tell you of more than one bad deed of his, but this will show you what a vile wretch he is. One day he met a poor widow who was going to market with a small coin in her hand. He saw what she had clutched in her fingers, wrested the piece of money from her and ran off. She succeeded in getting him arrested and brought before Pilate and she had two witnesses to prove her story. But he said they were all three lying and Pilate declared that his guilt was not proved, though he showed he knew better by giving the woman two coins in place of the one she was robbed of. The next day the poor woman's goat was found with its throat cut. Of course the fellow did it out of revenge, though nobody saw him."

"What do you think he is doing here?" Zatthu inquired.

"He wanders about much, stealing and putting his hand to all kinds of mischief. He is short, but strong; can run like a fox and never gets tired. He will be in Cæsarea before tomorrow noon."

"To tell Pilate he has seen the prisoner that escaped, I suppose," was Kelita's comment.

"Exactly."

"But he never saw me. He doesn't know who I am."

Shobek smiled as he replied,

"The man who talks as you did this afternoon tells who he is to a quickwitted fellow like him. Besides, he knows me and he knows just when I was first missed in Cæsarea."

"Then you think he will betray us?"

"I know he will."

"What is his name?"

"Pachru. I don't know to what race or nation that would point."

"Nor do I. But no matter. Well, Pachru, it would seem as if you were one of the foxes that would spoil our vines if we let you, but I don't think we shall. You say, Shobek, he will be in Cæsarea by tomorrow noon?"

"Yes, or even before this very night is half spent."

"And arriving there he will of course go at once to Pilate and tell him where I am."

"Of course."

"Very good. But you see there is no use in saying a man is in a certain place if he isn't there."

"What do you mean?" asked Shobek and Kelita together.

"I mean that I shall not remain here to be taken by the soldiers Pilate will send to capture me."

"They will search through all the hills of Galilee for you," said Kelita. "But we can hide from them. They won't find us."

"No, they won't find us, for we shan't be in Galilee at all."

"Where, then?"

"In Judæa."

Shobek opened his eyes in wonder at this utterance, but Kelita, after sitting a moment in silence, said,

"That would be a wise move. You could hide in Jerusalem for a while, for they would never think of looking for you there. Only it wouldn't do to talk to the people against Rome."

"Not unless I fled at once after doing so. But that I could do and find refuge in these hills again. Judæa and Galilee are not very far apart. I will confound the Romans by appearing first in the one region and then in the other, so they will never know where to look for me."

"Such constant flitting from place to place would not trouble me a whit," said Shobek. "I am made for it. But I fear it would wear you out."

"No, it would only make me strong; for it would be in Jehovah's service. Tomorrow we will start for Jerusalem."

IV

The start was made early on the following morning. Even as the sun peeped above the hills east of the Jordan, Zatthu, Kelita and Shobek were making their way toward Judæa.

But as they had a cunning foe to deal with they were meeting craft with craft. The road that ran past Mount Tabor into the heart of Samaria and then on to Jerusalem they did not take. Because this was the natural course for any one who would travel directly from Mount Tabor to the capital city of Judæa, they avoided it. From the village where we have found Zatthu addressing the gathered rustics there ran a brook that was one of the many that fed the Jordan. Bordering it was a path and this path they followed till it brought them to a highway that ran through almost the entire length of Palestine. It led through the low country that was adjacent to the Jordan till it reached the very border of the Dead Sea. At that point it turned eastward and brought the wayfarer by a circuitous course to Jerusalem. By keeping to this road Zatthu and his two companions felt sure they could avoid the Roman spy who had presumably gone to Cæsarea to inform against the much sought fugitive from Roman justice. While the spy with a band of soldiers would be seeking him among the Galilean hills, he would be ever increasing the distance between them by journeying continually southward.

It was all well planned. With a confident heart Zatthu walked rapidly along the path by the brookside and reached the desired highway ere the sun was two hours high. Then the three proceeded directly southward at a slower pace. They felt the increasing heat. They were surely far from danger.

Before noon they reached Scythopolis on the border of Samaria. Here they rested several hours, for the road from

that point ran through an unwooded tract for a number of miles and would expose them to the sun's intensest rays.

In the middle of the afternoon they resumed their journey, still walking at a very leisurely pace. There were no villages of size along the road, but at nightfall they could find shelter in some rustic's hut or if need be sleep beneath the naked stars. They had taken the precaution to bring food with them from Scythopolis.

Proceeding confidently yet warily they suddenly saw what made them stand still. Some three hundred paces ahead a small stream, that had its source in the hills of Samaria, crossed the road on its way to join the Jordan. On its banks was a thicket of reeds such as grow by the Dead Sea and the Jordan and reach a height sufficient to afford some protection from the slanting rays of a westering sun. The thicket had plainly been used to yield such shelter, for from it emerged six soldiers whose accoutrements glittered in the glowing light even though they wore no breastplates.

"Romans," said Kelita. "To the hills! To the hills at once."

"Why not wait for them?" said Zatthu. "They would not know who we were; and the hills have no woods for us to hide in."

"We are all three known by all the Romans in Palestine — you, because a full description of you has been sent to every post; Shobek by his height; and I by this hump of mine. Our best chance is to take to these hills. See, they are turning this way. We will get such a good start that they cannot overtake us."

"Yes, we must make for the hills," said Shobek, in whose mind schemes were already forming. "You two go ahead and veer off to the right, for I noticed a path leading up from the road not very far back. Let us start at a walk. If they run we will run too."

Kelita led the way. Zatthu followed and Shobek went

close behind him. It was toward the hills of Gilboa that they directed their steps. The whole eastern part of the province of Samaria slopes down to the low lying ravine of the Jordan, and these hills, some fifteen hundred feet in height, lie a few miles to the west of the river. The ascent to them being gradual, Zattu and his companions did not at once pass onto rising ground as they left the road.

But their action excited the suspicion of the Romans who quickened their pace. Noticing this, the Hebrews did the same. The Romans broke into a trot. So did the three. To make their course a diagonal instead of the two sides of an angle, the Romans abandoned the road and also made for the hills. But they did not thereby gain at once upon the fugitives. Kelita bore off so sharply to the right that the backs of himself and the two behind him were turned squarely upon their pursuers.

The Hebrews had now come to rising ground. They slackened their pace a little and the Romans began to gain. But soon the path was reached. It took a winding course, now level and now ascending, and it gave the feet a surer footing. Coursing rapidly along it the fugitives gained a little till their pursuers also struck the path. Then for a considerable time the distance between the two parties remained very much the same.

The mind of Shobek was active as he ran. It easily saw through the tactics of the Romans. They meant to keep together so that they could not be assailed one by one; and they felt sure of wearing down the men they were pursuing, who could find no shelter or concealment in the barren hills.

"They are clever, but I will foil them," said Shobek to himself, and he watched for an opportunity.

And before very long the opportunity came. Though the pace was only a very slow trot, it was exhausting. Even the perfectly trained athlete finds it hard to run up the most gentle elevation. Several times the three stopped and let

their pursuers gain upon them; but the gain was slight, for as soon as the Romans noticed the halt they also took a breathing spell. But after they had followed the path for a good mile they passed into a wilder and rockier formation. The rise was steeper here. The rests had to be more frequent. Every moment Shobek was eyeing the ground to make it his ally in effecting their pursuers' downfall.

Passing up an unusually steep grade, the three found the path taking a level course for a short distance. Instinctively they rested and looked ahead. To his joy Shobek saw that their way was now to lie for some fifty paces through a narrow steep defile, the upper portion of which was shut in by rocks that rose sheer on either side, and was only wide enough for men to pass through it in single file.

"Up through the pass as fast as you can go!" he said in a low tense voice to his two comrades. "I think we have them now."

He dashed on ahead, the others close behind him. Emerging into the freer space he bade Zatthu and Kelita to stand with drawn swords in the pass, a few paces from its upper end, as if they intended to give fight; he himself looked quickly around to see if nature favored the kind of warfare he had in mind. To his satisfaction he saw loose stones, small and large, lying all around and a rock heavier than an ordinary man could lift not deeply imbedded in the ground.

"Hold them by parley or by any means you can for a few moments," he said to Zatthu and Kelita. "Then do as I bid you and I will give these fellows a surprise."

In a very brief space the Romans reached the lower end of the defile, looked up through it, saw the glittering swords and prepared themselves for the seemingly inevitable conflict. Slowly they advanced with their own swords in their hands; but unwilling to attack unknown men without making sure that they were enemies of Rome, they halted, and their leader, who proved to be a decurion, called out,

"Who are you?" Why do you run from us?"

"Why do you pursue us?" replied Zatthu.

"We pursued because you ran. You saw we were soldiers and you straightway took to the hills. Now you stand with drawn swords to resist us. It all shows that you are enemies of Rome. So again I say, who are you?"

"We are Hebrews. No Hebrew is a friend of Rome except the traitors who are paid with Roman gold. And, praise to Jehovah, they are few."

"You admit that you are Hebrews. I am sure you are the very ones whom Galba, the centurion in command at Jerusalem, sent me with these men under me to capture. I am a Roman decurion. I command you to surrender."

"You will have to come and take us. We know Rome's cruelty too well to give ourselves into her hands."

Bidding his men follow him the decurion started up the defile to the assault. But he advanced slowly and warily, for the higher ground his adversaries occupied and the necessity of advancing in single file put the assailants at a disadvantage. And not more than a single step forward had they taken when Shobek gave the command, "Out of the pass. Quick! Give place to me!" and Zatthu and Kelita, having full confidence in his resourcefulness, darted up into the open space.

They were hardly out of the narrow passage before Shobek was in it, rushing headlong at the file of soldiers with a stone of goodly size in his right hand and several more supported by his left arm inside his tunic. The decurion who confronted him was a brave man, but, like all his comrades, he was without breast-plate or shield. Not expecting to engage in any passage of arms the little company had started out merely to get tidings of Zatthu's whereabouts and bring back the news that might lead to his capture. So they were armed and armored so as to bear the oppressive heat without too great discomfort.

Believing his only defence was in taking the aggressive, the decurion darted up the passage to thrust this formidable adversary through, even as Shobek bore down upon him. But he had no chance to use his sword. Before he was within thrusting distance Shobek let fly his ponderous missile with all his force. It struck the decurion full in the chest; he went crashing down and brought to earth the man behind him who was, however, but little hurt. Stepping astride the two bodies Shobek hurled with the same terrific force a second stone, and down went the soldier who was third in line; and more quickly than his doings could be told he felled the fourth man by still another missile.

Half of the attacking party being thus disabled, Shobek darted back to the end of the passage and before the dazed Romans could realize their danger he had the big rock, which he had previously pried and pulled out of the soil, in the middle of the path just at the entrance to the passageway. A vigorous push would send it crashing down upon the prostrate Romans.

"Surrender," he cried, "or I shall roll this boulder down upon you, and there will be no life left then in you three who are lying on the ground."

"Tell him we surrender, and give up your swords," said the decurion faintly to the three uninjured men who were bending over him and his fallen comrades. "My ribs are crushed and I can hardly speak. Probus and Dromo, I fear, are in no better case."

"Worse," groaned the one who had received the second missile. "Not only are my ribs smashed but my right arm was broken by my fall."

From the third who had been felled there came no voice, for he had for the moment been made unconscious. But his testimony was not needed. It was folly to resist and bring down the threatening boulder.

"We surrender," cried one of the soldiers sullenly. "We can't fight catapults."

"Then throw your swords, all six of them, in this direction."

This was done and the viciousness that was put into the throw showed the wrath and resentment of the defeated party. Shobek gathered up the swords and laid them down outside the pass. Then he faced the soldiers again and said,

"Are any of you badly hurt? One of us is skilled in treating wounds and will give you help if you wish it."

"Yes, with a knife-thrust in the heart," said Kelita in a low voice which only his two friends could hear. But Shobek did not heed him, and having no taste for ending the lives of his fellow beings, he was relieved when after a few moments came the answer,

"No, we do not want your assistance. We find we can all walk, and we will look after ourselves. But you are a pretty joker to ask if we are hurt much after pelting us with stones that would batter down a fortress."

Without answering this sally Shobek, with Kelita's assistance, gathered up the swords of the Romans and started to lead the way up the hillside.

"No, no! Shobek," said Zatthu anxiously, "You are bleeding and, I fear, badly hurt. We must rest here and care for your wound."

"S-s-sh," said Shobek. "Not a word now. The Romans must not know about it. That fellow that fell with the decurion got his sword into my side when I was standing over him and his captain. But don't be alarmed. He did not hurt me much."

V

It was not till they were well out of sight that Shobek allowed notice to be taken of his wound. He was unwilling that the Romans should suppose him so badly hurt that he could not travel far and could be found by an organized search. But his wound was really a severe one and made it necessary that they should find a resting-place as soon as possible. Journeying over a mountain path was painful and might cause dangerous inflammation.

Far up the hillside they rested while Kelita dressed the wound and stayed the flow of blood. Shobek then declared that he was able to proceed by stepping cautiously and slowly.

"But before we start," he said, "I want you to bury those six Roman swords, Kelita, where they will never be found."

"A pity to waste such good weapons," replied Kelita. "Why not keep them?"

"Zatthu and I have swords; we got them in Cæsarea. You always have that dagger of yours when it comes to fighting. Put them where no one will ever see them. I am really sorry for those soldiers. What a story they will have to make up to explain why they come back without their weapons!"

"The Romans are all liars. They will make up their story without any trouble; and even if they told the plain truth, they would make out a good case for themselves. That boulder would have pounded the life out of those three who lay there sprawling."

So saying, Kelita, not without reluctance, concealed the swords in a thicket a little distance from the path and the three went slowly on their way. Soon passing over the crest of the ridge they had been climbing, they descended into a fertile valley on the other side. Here several shepherds kept their small flocks and with one of them they found shelter. He was a Samaritan as were all his brethren; but the sight of

a wounded Hebrew roused his compassion and to all three he gave the best accommodation that his meagre home allowed.

Shobek sank down gladly on the rude bed that was prepared for him and there he had to stay. 'To have gone further would have endangered his life; so there was nothing to do but wait and risk pursuit and capture. For a number of days they watched in deep anxiety; but no Romans appeared. Half of the routed soldiers had been too badly hurt to travel rapidly and they were a considerable distance from Jerusalem. By the time the decurion and his command arrived at Jerusalem no doubt the three Hebrews were supposed to have made good their escape into some out of the way fastnesses in the hills.

As day after day passed by and they were still unmolested, Kelita grew restless.

"Could you not look after Shobek and his wound while I go and spy the country?" he said one day to Zatthu after they had been some ten days in the valley.

"That I would gladly do, but where do you want to go?"

"Up into Galilee. I am sure that miscreant that found us at Mount Tabor is trying to track us. I want to see what mischief he is brewing."

"Perhaps he would capture you. Then I should feel that my right hand was gone."

"No, your left. Shobek is your right. But never fear. That fox could never find Kelita."

"Well, go and Jehovah be with you."

So Kelita departed and was gone five days. A smile of satisfaction was on his face when he returned and told the tale of his wanderings.

"It is just as I thought," he said. "The dirty knave went straight to Cæsarea and brought back thirty soldiers into Galilee. They divided into three parties and they are still scouring the country to find us. They are so afraid of us," he chuckled, "that not less than ten dare hunt."

"How did you learn all this?"

"Always on the lookout I saw yesterday the glint of armor half a mile away, climbed a pine by the pathway, and under the shade of it the soldiers I had sighted rested. So for nearly an hour I heard their talk."

"So Galilee," said Zatthu, "is searched by the Romans. Well, I will carry out my plan and go to Jerusalem."

And this he did the very next day, though his two friends protested and demanded that he should wait till Shobek was well and they could accompany him.

"That would not do at all," was his rejoinder. "In different ways you are both marked men. Your presence would betray me."

"But how about yourself?" inquired Kelita. "The soldiers at the gate would recognize you. Many now know you by sight."

"But many do not. Moreover, I can disguise myself. Never fear. Before you are on your feet again, Shobek, I shall be back safe and sound."

And so it proved. Before the third Sabbath had come round Zatthu rejoined them. No harm had come to him and his experiences had deepened his belief in his own call to the leadership of his people.

"I am needed, sorely needed," he said as he told his story. "I got into Jerusalem without trouble. Our host, you know, lent me a shepherd's outfit; I joined two men who were taking some sheep into the city and the guard at the gate hardly looked at me as I went in. At my own home my brother and sister were as rejoiced and as surprised to see me as if I had come back from the dead; and I had much to tell them. But I did not linger there, for I feared the house was watched. It was Simeon the Pharisee that gave me shelter and arranged for me to speak in the synagogues of the city.

"Three times I did so. The matter was kept very quiet, and when I spoke it was a surprise to most who heard me.

It was in the Synagogue of Levi that I first appeared, quite to the astonishment of many. Then in the Synagogue of Joshua. They were all pleased to see me. That was plain. But I could not awaken much feeling; and I saw why. I was a hunted man. They could not look on me as a leader any more. But when I spoke the third time, again in the Synagogue of Levi, I really touched and roused them. I pictured David as a hunted outcast yet still guided by Jehovah and staying his trust in Him. They were beginning to be stirred. There was that in the air which makes a speaker know his words are going home — when the end came as suddenly as I had thought it would. The spies had tracked me. At the well barred door a knock was heard — the knock of Rome.

“But I was not caught, though their approach had indeed been wary. Our sentinels had been seized before they could give warning, but before the Romans were inside the synagogue I was out of their reach. The moment the knock was heard I was hurried behind some draperies. A concealed door was then opened for an instant and I was taken through an underground passage, known only to a few, that connected the synagogue with the house of Elioenai the scribe on the other side of the street. Thence I was taken outside and I found my way to my established hiding place. When the Romans entered the synagogue no one would admit that I had been there or give them any clue whatever.”

“And how did you get out of the city?” inquired Shobek. “The gates must have been very closely guarded.”

“Just as I did at Cæsarea, though it was not quite so easily done as when you carried it through there. There is no one like you to help a man over a high wall on a dark night.”

“And what shall we do now?” asked Kelita.

“Find a hiding place in the hills of Judæa, now that Shobek seems to be fully recovered, and wait there for a time. I will show myself often enough to keep the Romans uneasy and

our people hopeful. Their zeal has cooled because they have not seen me or heard much about me for a long time. But I put fire into their hearts; and when they find that I am active still, they will be looking for the hour when Jehovah will set them free. And the hour will come. All that is needed to bring it is an unshaken faith."

"An unshaken faith!" said Kelita slowly and with a puzzled air. "An unshaken faith! Yes, that is the only thing that will bring success. But how long can a faith be kept unshaken if nothing is done? Would it not be wise to make it burst at once into a flame? Why not raise the banner of revolt as Maccabæus the Hammer did, and see if our people would not flock to it from near and far?"

"There have been times when I was on the point of doing it," answered Zatthu. "But we have too strong a foe to face."

"There are not many Roman soldiers in all Palestine."

"But more, whole armies more, to come at call. And terrible is the might of the Roman legion. Rome's hosts are not to be overcome as the great Judas triumphed over Antiochus and his generals."

"But when will the time for action come?"

"When Jehovah's call is heard. When He speaks unmistakably to some one of our nation as He spoke of old to Deborah, and to Gideon. The war when it comes must be a holy war, not such a one as Judas the Hammer waged against Antiochus. He was brave. He was great. He was victorious. But the blows he struck, he struck by the might of his own great spirit. Jehovah surely looked down with approval upon him, but Jehovah's hand was not seen in the days of battle. Jehovah did not destroy the armies of Syria as He drowned the Egyptians and visited the hosts of Sennacherib with death."

Zatthu ceased and silence fell for a time upon the three. They were sitting outside the shepherd's hovel. It was a day in the autumn month of Tisri when the early rains begin.

Already the showers had been frequent enough to freshen all green growing things; but the sun was then shining brightly down upon them and the air was deliciously clear and cool. Shobek, who had not spoken at all, had a grave look that wore the tinge of resignation. He did not now break the silence; but to one who tried to read his thoughts his look would have suggested invincible loyalty rather than buoyant hope. Kelita's questioning mood had by no means passed, but he too was dominated by an unwavering attachment to his leader; and even though he longed for a more active policy, the calm resolution written all over his countenance showed that he would follow him unflinchingly even to death. But he too now kept his thoughts to himself, and it was Zattu who again began to speak.

"Yes," he resumed, "it must be a holy war, and the call to it cannot come till the people are ready to hear it and obey. Their minds are perverted now. They are heeding a false prophet; and not till they have turned from him and repented of their folly will Jehovah speak. All Galilee, as you know, is running after Jesus of Nazareth, the son of a carpenter, because by some strange unhallowed power he heals their diseases, or makes them think he does, while he sees Jehovah's chosen people trodden under the oppressor's heel and does not lift hand or voice to deliver them."

"Do they also believe in him at Jerusalem?" asked Shobek.

"I am thankful to say that they do not. That is the one thing that gives me hope just now. The common people, who are as easily led astray at this present time as they were in the wilderness under Moses, approve his monstrous claims. But the men of light and understanding see how unworthy, how impious he is. I was seized and taken to Cæsarea, you know, just before our great Passover. Just after I was carried away he appeared in Jerusalem at the time of the Passover, and grossly offended our priests and all our men of dignity and learning by overthrowing the tables of the money-

changers at the temple. And then, to crown his presumption, he drove away with a scourge not only the money-changers but all those who sold animals for sacrifice. Many of the weaker minds believed on him then because of the things he did. But the Pharisees and all who keep alive our sacred traditions were shocked by his conduct. And just so it was when he came again to the city not a great while after the Passover. He did not tarry long, and yet long enough to show what an impostor he is. Again he performed some of those strange cures that he works; and in particular he healed a man at the pool of Bethesda on the Sabbath and bade him take up his bed and walk. When the Pharisees reproached him for thus desecrating our holy day, on which no man is to work, he burst forth into a passionate speech, in which he claimed to be the Son of God. So filled with wrath were our leaders that they were eager to put him to death. But he evaded them and quickly withdrew from the city.

“So you see he does not mislead the minds that are fortified by study of our Scriptures and reverent observance of our sacred usages. But the common people are always fickle. He has got them on his side throughout all Galilee. Here in Judæa and in Jerusalem he contrives to pervert many of them. But his day will pass! His day will pass! Every false prophet shows how false he is in time. And when his power is broken and the people run after him no longer, then I am sure the call of Jehovah will be heard; then the true prophet will arise; then will he raise the banner that the God of Israel himself will lead to victory.”

“And the prophet’s name shall be Zatthu,” said Kelita fervently; for he had been reached and quickened by his leader’s enthusiasm.

VI

So Zatthu went south into the Judæan hills, devoutly believing that the call from on high would come when the Star of the One born at Bethlehem should wane. Following Zatthu's plan they had found their way into Judæa instead of returning into Galilee; for the spy, they felt sure, was still scouring Galilee with the myrmidons sent out from Cæsarea. True, the centurion in command at Jerusalem was from time to time dispatching searching parties in various directions from that city. Such was the fame of the three outlaws that the quest for them was not readily abandoned. But Judæa was very mountainous. It was no difficult matter to find hiding places in its hills where no band of soldiers would ever come unless treachery guided them. And of treachery they were not afraid.

Through the whole length of Judæa runs a lofty table-land from north to south. Nearly everywhere it is well over two thousand feet in height, Jerusalem itself being twenty-six hundred feet above the level of the ocean and nearly four thousand feet higher than that deep-sunken body of water, the Dead Sea. Steep is the ascent westward from this vast salty pool, and less than twenty miles from its central part is Hebron, where Abraham dwelt and David at one time reigned. It is a lofty point, three thousand feet above the ocean level, and looks down on the oaks of Mamre where the three angels came to the great father of Israel as he sat in his tent in the heat of the day.

It was hither that Zatthu found his way with his two devoted allies. He reasoned rightly that the Romans would go northward rather than southward for him and would never look for him in the high mountain country of Hebron. So for a whole month he remained there in security, nor did he live in concealment. He had come there with a purpose.

While he was waiting for the great and final hour to strike he would get into communion with the spirits of the olden time who had walked with Israel's God. He would tread the ground that they had trod. He would feel their presence lingering there and giving strength to his soul.

Hebron! Abraham had there received the holy visitants who made known the dread Jehovah's will. And there had the royal David dwelt, with whom the Rock of Israel made an everlasting Covenant. Where in all Palestine was there a more hallowed spot? Where could the past of God's chosen people speak more appealingly?

The oaks of Mamre? It was among them that Israel's founder had pitched his tent; and the people of Hebron still pointed to the very tree that was held to be Abraham's own. Not without awe did Zatthu stand before it. The very soil about it seemed sacred. Jehovah could not reveal himself in unveiled majesty and splendor to mortal eyes. Moses alone had seen him face to face. But on this very ground had stood the three who came straight from the presence of Jehovah and uttered His divine behest. Reverently Zatthu gazed up into the heavens, almost expecting that they would open and the same messengers that had startled Abraham's eyes would show themselves again. Surely they were not far away. Surely they were reading his own thought and blessing it. The people he had set himself to free was the same that Jehovah had delivered out of Egypt and saved again and again from the uncircumcised heathen in the Promised Land. Over this same ground had walked David whom God had taken from the sheep-cote and from following the sheep to do mighty deeds for Israel; David, whose seed was to endure forever and his throne as the days of heaven. Yet his seed was now crushed under Rome's iron heel and his throne dishonored by the worshippers of graven images. This profanation could not but be seen and noted in the heavens. Surely the divine displeasure must be ever waxing greater. Surely the storm

of Jehovah's wrath must soon burst upon the Romans and the promise made to David be fulfilled!

Not once but many times did these thoughts come to Zatthu while he sojourned at Hebron and walked among the oaks of Mamre. So his stay there brought new strength and courage to his spirit. But he did not spend his days in merely communing with his people's past and dreaming dreams. Many times he went forth with Shobek and Kelita to sound the minds of the mountain dwellers and instil the longing for freedom into their souls. He stopped the wayfarer in his wandering; he halted the man at the plow; he made the vine dresser stand still and listen to his speech. Toil was not so imperious a master as this champion of Israel's long-suffering children. And a hearing he always gained. No one could resist his fiery vehemence. His eye flashed and his words were like a burning torrent as he pictured his country's wrongs. Often it was a group that he addressed, and when he passed on, those who had listened to him felt that they had seen a prophet and slowly took up their tasks again in a wondering mood.

Did he really make converts? Were the men who heard him ready to drop spade and pruning hook if the standard of revolt were raised? This he could not surely tell; but he was hopeful. He was sowing seed that Jehovah would ripen into a mighty harvest when the day of deliverance came. That, he could not but believe. To doubt it would have been to question whether Jehovah still called Israel his chosen people.

But the life was a restless one; it brought a mood of extreme restlessness. After a month at Hebron Zatthu found that the oaks among which Abraham had pitched his tent and David had walked and brooded ceased to speak potently to his spirit. He wanted new inspiration. So northward he journeyed with the faithful two by the road that led directly to Jerusalem. While Kelita and Shobek kept themselves in

concealment, he ventured again into the city and again made an impassioned harangue in one of its many synagogues. Prudence however bade him not repeat the experience, and he was out of the reach of the Romans before they knew of this new challenge to their vigilance.

It was to Zereda, an ancient village on one of the shoulders of Mount Ephraim, that the three now found their way. Not near the travelled road between north and south, it afforded security as well as shelter. Comfortably lodged there by a humble but devout and patriotic Israelite, Zatthu made excursions into the surrounding country as he had done at Hebron. And as at Hebron he sought strength from his people's story. Indeed, he went far to seek it. There were no spots with sacred associations close at hand. But beyond the Jordan valley was Mount Pisgah from whose summit Moses had looked forth on the land he could not enter but was allowed to see. Thither he went, not minding that the way was arduous over little frequented paths.

He did not let Kelita and Shobek climb the mountain with him. Up to the top of Pisgah he made his solitary way, for on its summit he wished to be alone. And there he spent a wondrous and never to be forgotten hour. Below him was the very scene on which Moses with the undimmed eye and the unabated strength had wistfully looked forth. There was the Dead Sea where Jehovah's wrath against the evil doer had been so terribly shown. There was the Jordan whose waters had stood still that the Holy Ark might be carried over. And beyond was the land on which Moses had gazed with rapt vision, the land which he, Zatthu, was longing and hoping to free. The deep places in his heart were stirred as he looked on the mountains dimly seen in the purple distance and the numberless vales where his people had gathered their harvests and tended their flocks from generation to generation. And there too had they fought the heathen and seen their enemies smitten by the hand of Jehovah. What a great

and wondrous history had Israel had! It was the God who called Abraham from Ur that sent Joseph into Egypt. It was the same God who delivered his chosen people from bondage through his servant Moses, fed them in the wilderness, led them into the land of promise and bare them and carried them all the days of old. And how mighty were the men he raised up to guide them and inspire them — mighty in valor, mighty in their faith, mighty in prophecy and song! There were Joshua and Samuel and David and Solomon and Isaiah and Daniel! To what other nation had figures so august appeared! Yes, and mightiest of all was Moses whom Jehovah had honored as he had honored no other man. For there on the near-by slopes of Nebo had Jehovah himself laid him to his rest while no mortal eye looked on. Reverently Zattu looked across the intervening valley to Nebo's summit, and with a deeper sense of awe than he had ever felt before he thought of that strange burial. Had angels ever since been keeping watch over the sacred spot? Were they even now peering through the clouds of heaven and making sure that the earth stirred by the very hand of Him who made it suffered no defilement? And even as the wonder came to him he turned his eyes away. It seemed to him he was gazing on that which was too holy for human eyes to see.

It was with a chastened and yet with an exultant spirit that he finally made his way slowly down the mountain. The great spirits of the olden days had crossed his vision. What was he to Moses and Elijah and Daniel? Yet they were but the servants of Jehovah. It was Jehovah who had made them strong to speak His bidding and to do His will. And His will was to be accomplished now as much as in the days of old. Some one surely would be raised up to accomplish it. He dared not think that it was he, Zattu, who was to hear the voice from heaven. And yet — and yet — if the voice should speak, he would be ready to hear it and obey.

VII

The plan that Zatthu had rudely outlined was carried out. With incessant and feverish activity the three traversed Galilee and then showed themselves in Judæa, far away to the south. More than once the Romans heard that the man who so persistently baffled and defied them was in Jerusalem; yet even before they had fully wakened to the fact he was gone.

It was into Galilee that they first directed their steps when they ended their sojourn at Zereda. Flitting from place to place, they had made a brief stay in the village of Sepphoris, only a few miles from Nazareth, at the very time when Naarah and Thisoa were visiting Merari there. How Thisoa would have been thrilled had she known that the man who had won her heart was so near! From Sepphoris they went northward and there was no town or village in the region where they were not known. But the better known they became, the more the dangers thickened about them. It was only by unceasing vigilance and unceasing activity that they kept themselves immune.

Nine months of this wearing campaign have now passed by. It is early summer again and the three are in the little village of Safed some ten miles to the north of Lake Gennesaret. It has been made known that the hunted but elusive Zatthu will speak to the people of the village just before sundown when their daily toil is ended. Beneath an aged oak in the center of the village he waits for his hearers to gather. Kelita and Shobek, it is needless to say, are at his side.

All three have aged under this aging experience. Kelita's foxlike face has a still sharper look and shows lines not often to be seen in a man not yet thirty-five. The stamp of maturity is beginning to show itself markedly in the still fresh and youthful face of Shobek. He is as kindly as ever, but gravity and the settled will are to be read in his countenance which

has grown to be that of a man. Yet it is Zatthu who has changed the most. His face has grown very noble. A lofty enthusiasm has made it so. But his features are wasted. His eye is feverishly bright. It would seem as if the fire in his spirit were burning his mortal frame away.

As the sun draws near its setting he paces restlessly up and down beneath the spreading branches of the oak. Kelita and Shobek are sitting and leaning against the sturdy trunk.

"They will come," says Kelita, noting his leader's ill-concealed uneasiness. "These people lead a humdrum life. Nothing short of an earthquake could keep them away."

"You know I have talked to them before."

"That was months ago. You don't make the mistake of speaking to the same people so often as to dull your words."

"And you don't repeat yourself," added Shobek. "I often wonder at that. You really have but one thing to say: 'Rise against Rome.' But you say it in so many different ways that it seems always new."

The villagers now began to gather and the conversation ceased. It was as Kelita had predicted. The life of such a rustic community was monotonously dreary. Its members eagerly assembled to hear the man whom they had listened to before and who could give them unwonted sensations.

The sun had not yet set. Its light streamed on a motley assemblage of young men and old, mothers with their babes, and curious children. But they were rustics all, with the rustic mingling of shrewdness and simplicity and the rustic sense that life is to be taken without over much rejoicing or poignant sorrow. They had the toughness of fibre that belongs to the children of the soil. Not all of them were Hebrews. Many Syrians had come into Galilee. Settlers had wandered in from Phrygia, Arabia, Persia, and other not distant lands. One or two Greek faces were to be seen in the gathered throng. Yet nearly all were Asiatics, with the oriental dreaminess, the oriental love of glowing vivid speech,

and at the same time with that saving possession of sound practical judgment which mother earth bestows on those who keep company with her day by day.

Altogether some five hundred streamed to the spot and when it would seem as if the whole village had assembled, Zatthu mounted a low platform which Kelita and Shobek had made and began to speak.

His bearers got from his words all they had expected or desired. Zatthu's speech had not grown tame through frequent iteration. He was now, as always, by turns passionate, appealing, graphic, rapt, and quiet. He delighted his listeners by the richness of his imagery and by his splendid narrative power. Yet when he had finished he had not bent them to his will. They were not responsive. His course was not theirs. They were critical instead of enthusiastic.

"You talk well," said an aged white-haired man, "but you don't cure our diseases."

"That's not what Jehovah has called me to do. My work is to free Israel."

"Moses did both," was the comment of another man of years.

"That," said Zatthu, "was in the days long ago when Jehovah was continually showing signs and wonders to Israel."

"Jesus of Nazareth shows them now."

"Yes, he cures us of all our ailments."

"And he'll be our Moses too."

"Yes, yes, yes, he'll be our Moses."

These crisp statements came in quick succession from different lips and the last one roused a quite general echo. For immediately came the outcry from all parts of the assemblage,

"Jesus of Nazareth is our Moses. Jesus of Nazareth is our Moses."

These words again and again repeated sent a chill to Zatthu's heart. Chagrined and saddened he waited for the clamor to cease. When there was quiet again, he asked,

“When was Jesus here and whom has he healed? Do not all speak at once, but let some one who can call Jehovah to witness that he has been cured by this Jesus come forward and tell me the truth.”

A sturdy middle-aged man with an intelligent honest face edged his way out of the crowd and stood directly before Zatthu.

“Jesus was here last month,” he said, “the month of Zif.¹ It was the tenth day of the month. I remember it well, for on that day he cured my blindness and made me see.”

“How long had you been blind?”

“I was born blind.”

“Yes, he was born blind,” said several corroborating voices, while the man stood proudly erect and looked up at Zatthu as if he rejoiced in thus bearing witness to the power of the man who had healed him.

Convinced that he spoke the truth, Zatthu looked at him sorrowfully for a moment and then stretched out his arms and said to the gathering before him,

“Go your ways, my children. You are sheep without a shepherd. It is through the power of Beelzebub that this Jesus heals you. He will never come to you again. He is no Moses. He will never lift the yoke of Rome from your necks. In time you will see this. But go your ways now. Your deliverance will not come till your hearts are changed.”

As the crowd dispersed many tongues were loosed. There was at once a Babel of voices, but to what was uttered Zatthu shut his ears. He would have converse with none. He was sick at heart and he wanted to be alone. With Kelita and Shobek he turned from the chattering throng and left the village behind him.

On a hillside two miles away was the dwelling of a goatherd who had given him and his two followers food and shelter before. Thither he now went and once more found hospitality.

¹ May in the Roman calendar.

Food was set before him, but he scarcely touched it. Telling Shobek and Kelita that he wished to be by himself, he climbed to the crest of the hill on the slope of which the goatherd had built his humble abode.

The night air was cooling. Above him shone the stars. He looked below and saw the earth resting peacefully in its mantle of darkness. He looked above and felt that the myriad lights in the unclouded sky spoke the same message of tranquillity. Jehovah reigned. Earth said it. The heavens said it. Yes, He surely reigned; He was keeping watch over Israel; He would neither slumber nor sleep. Uplifted by his trustful mood, Zattu raised his arms heavenward and cried,

“O Thou who hast chosen my people to be Thy people, be Thou our Shepherd still. Make our fold to be upon the high mountains of Israel; seek out that which was lost: bind up that which was broken; and destroy the fat and the strong who make thy people their prey. Yes, guide and deliver Israel and guide me, O Thou great and merciful Jehovah, till the day of deliverance comes. Keep Thou mine eyes from tears, my feet from falling and my soul from death. For truly I am Thy servant and I pay my vows unto Thee.”

Perhaps Zattu did not know how fully his prayer was couched in the language of Ezekiel and the Psalms. Instinctively he used the words and phrases of his people's Scriptures when he sought communion with the Most High. Such channels of expression brought refreshment to his soul. They made the streams which had strengthened the men of old flow into his own bruised spirit. So now he sat down comforted. Jehovah was with him. It must be so.

It was a commanding crest to which he had mounted. The moon had risen and in its light he caught the gleam of the waters of Gennesaret. Gennesaret! Right above it stood Capernaum, and there, from the house of Aristarchus, he had looked upon the lake's blue depths. There still was the house by the lake's edge, though not to be descried in the pale light

that obscured even more than it revealed. Yes, there it stood, and there doubtless at this very moment was Thisoa.

Thisoa! Had he thought of her in the long months that had passed since, largely through her own contriving, he had safely made his midnight dash for the hills? Yes, he had thought of her often, but not with longing. Jehovah had raised up this alien maid to do him priceless service. But the service had come to an end. He had felt that he must not take it as rendered personally to him. It had been given to the cause to which he was devoted, to his down-trodden people whom he was striving to free. So he had never thought of going back to Capernaum. It was not safe. It would bring himself into danger, and not only that but Aristarchus and his whole household would be imperilled if he went there again. So he had not even tried to keep in communication with this house that had so wondrously befriended him. All that was of the past. He had naught to do with maids or with generous aliens who brought trouble on themselves by helping him. When he had accomplished his great task he would seek them out, thank them for the part they had taken in bringing about the great deliverance and receive their congratulations. Now he belonged wholly to Jehovah and the work Jehovah had given him to do.

But sudden and complete sometimes are the revulsions of the human spirit. Reminiscence has a startling power when it is allowed to have its sway. It now worked mightily in Zatthu's troubled soul. He thought of those days at Capernaum when Aristarchus was most hospitable, Xenodice most gracious, and Thisoa full of interest and sympathy. How heartily she listened to him and entered into all his plans! How eagerly she welcomed him when he came back from his visits to his own people and told what he had seen and heard! What a wise discretion she had shown when she gave her judgments on his oftentimes perturbing experiences, and what shrewdness in outwitting the centurion and saving his own

life! A mighty rush of feeling and desire surged suddenly into his heart. Gladly would he at that very moment be in the friendly home that had given him shelter and encouragement. Gladly would he sit with the beautiful fearless girl and tell her of his wanderings, his perils, his ceaseless vigilance in evading the snares of his foes, and the soreness of his heart at the lukewarm temper of his people. With what ready sympathy would his every word be heard! What an inspiration would come to him as he looked into the glowing face and caught the enthusiasm of the noble and unselfish spirit! The man in him spoke as it had never spoken before. He felt unutterably lonely. His whole being cried out for Thisoa.

And then came another revulsion of the spirit. This was wrong, utterly and miserably wrong. Was he, whom Jehovah had called to a mighty task, to be ruled by such unnerving thoughts! God punished the men of old who murmured at His will. Even Moses was not allowed to enter the promised land. Was he, Zatthu, to prove unworthy and lose his zeal through longing for a Grecian maiden? He felt ashamed. He rebuked himself unsparingly and straightway sank into a disheartened mood out of which he could not at once lift himself.

For a long time he sat and brooded over these conflicting emotions in his spirit. Could a man so torn and divided do great things? Yes, he was called to do them and he must do them. These human longings must be stifled. He was being tried and tempted that his worth might be fully proved. It was Jehovah who was putting him to the test — Jehovah who was like a refiner's fire and like fuller's soap! The fire was fierce but he would not let it consume him. It would purify him, but he would be strong.

With grim resolve he rose and walked slowly down to the goatherd's dwelling. His courage was not gone, but it was chilled. It was too much like that of a shipwrecked man who

clings to his spar while he waits for a sail to show itself in the waste of waters. He was willing himself to be brave; but the courage that has its seat in the will has lost its kindling fire.

So in spite of his stern self-repression he entered the hut with a sense of despondency and weariness. He would have been more downcast had he seen that he had been followed all the way down from the summit where he had passed such a soul-shaking hour.

VIII

It was the spy long since noted by Kelita who was tracking him. This never tiring sleuth had been for long months on his trail. It was only through Kelita's sleepless vigilance that the enterprise of this cunning enemy had failed. Through the spy's representations small squads of soldiers were from time to time sent all over Galilee. He himself kept watch of Zatthu's movements, told the soldiers where to find him, and more than once led them to the spot where he fully counted on capturing the outlaw and his two companions.

But Kelita had an uncanny power of scenting danger. Again and again he had made Zatthu give up going to a village where he was expected but where he, Kelita, was sure Romans were in wait for him; or he had caused him to flee at midnight from some sheltering resort toward which his sensitive perception told him the enemy was drawing near.

He was alert as ever now. When Zatthu reached the goat-herd's house he found Kelita waiting for him just outside.

"Have you been far?" was the hunchback's query.

"Only to the crest of the hill, a scant half mile away."

"Did you see any one there?"

"Of course not. Who would be in such an out-of-the-way spot, especially after nightfall?"

"Some meddling knave — that wretch who wants to capture you, perhaps."

"Quiet your suspicions. There was no one there."

"If I had always kept my suspicions quiet you would not be alive today. I scent mischief. We had better be going."

"No. I am tired — tired in body and mind. I want to sleep."

"Sleep then, but it must not be for long. Some one has been lurking round here. I feel it."

On a rude bed that had been made for him Zatthu dropped

and sank instantly into a heavy slumber. He was too worn and weary to lie awake and brood as he so often did.

Some two hours after midnight he was rudely roused by Kelita. Sound as he was slumbering he shook off his sleepiness in an instant. Too long had he lived a hunted life to let the spell of drowsiness ever bind him fast.

"We must go," said the hunchback. "We must go at once. It is not safe to linger here any longer."

In a few moments the three were cautiously making their way down the mountain side by a trail that led into the heart of Galilee. The road that skirted the base of the mountain they thought it best to avoid. To escape the eye at once of the curious and the hostile was their immediate end.

The mountain was wooded only here and there. The stars were shining feebly now and the moon had set. It was with eyes peering steadily into the pale dim light that Kelita, who took the lead, walked cautiously on and the others followed. Suddenly he stopped. A hundred paces ahead was a copse of densely growing trees. From it a gentle breeze was blowing directly toward them. Kelita sniffed the air like a hound.

"There are men in that thicket," he whispered. "We must not go on."

"What shall we do?" said Zatthu in the same muffled voice. "Go back?"

"No. That rock will hide us. We will wait there and let them pass by."

Kelita pointed to a huge boulder that stood ten paces to one side of the path. They stole behind it and there watched and listened intently.

"How do you know there are men in the thicket?" whispered Zatthu.

"I got their scent. And once I heard just the faintest clink as if the scabbard of a sword had clashed against some piece of armor. Hark! You can hear them now."

All three listened. A low murmur of voices was clearly audible.

"Could they have seen us?" Zatthu asked.

"No, we were not near enough. But it was lucky we stopped when we did."

"It wasn't luck. It was because you have the scent of a hound, the eye of an eagle, and the sharpest ear that ever a man possessed."

"If you had senses half as keen, you would have known that some one was watching you when you were on the top of the mountain. It is that vile dog of a spy. He found you and then went to get a band of soldiers. Perhaps he went all the way to Capernaum for them. They are resting in the thicket. Pretty soon they will come out and go up to the house we left in the nick of time. They think they have us sure if they surround it before daylight. But let us not talk any more. We shan't have to wait long before they pass by on their way up to the goatherd's."

Kelita predicted truly. Before a half hour had gone by a small party of soldiers began to defile from the copse. It was still an hour before the first glimmer of daylight. The soldiers meant to conceal themselves about the house of the goatherd before their approach could be seen.

With Roman discipline they came up the path, ten of them in all, silent, treading firmly but cautiously, on their guard against surprise. The glint of their armor, dimly visible for the moon was behind a cloud, showed that they were equipped for a soldier's work. Since the episode at the Cæsarea prison and the encounter at the pass the trio that had so worsted Roman legionaries had been looked upon as the doughtiest of enemies. To overpower them was a task to put men on their mettle. But the foe these men were in quest of was not hidden. His whereabouts was known. They did not therefore think it necessary to be suspiciously watchful till they drew near the goatherd's abode. So they passed by the big boulder

behind which the three were lurking without dreaming that it was screening the very men they had been sent to find.

Unfortunately the last of the ten was more vigilant than his comrades. When they were a few steps beyond the boulder he glanced back and was sure he saw an object that might be a head, projecting beyond the dark stone mass for a moment and then quickly withdrawn. At once he was fired with a desire to investigate. If he dropped behind and made an important discovery, the breach of discipline would be forgiven. He resolved to try it.

He was keen of sight and his eyes had not deceived him. The footsteps seeming to show that the file had passed, Shobek had thrust his head incautiously forth to watch them on their upward way. He saw however that the soldier in the rear turned and looked. He drew his head back, but he felt that he had been seen. Listening intently, he and his two comrades heard a stealthy footstep drawing near.

The soldier was wary. He heard nothing; probably what had roused his suspicion was a trick of the darkness; still it was with drawn sword that he stole to the rear of the rock and looked.

He had time to see nothing. In an instant Shobek had him by the throat and bore him to the ground. He was unable to cry out, but without trying to do so he had given the alarm. As he was seized he thrust violently with his sword. It did not touch Shobek but struck the boulder and fell with a clang to the stony ground.

The noise just reached the ears of the decurion who was in charge of the ten and all his men. Faint though it was, it was just the noise to attract the attention of soldiers. They all stopped and turned about. The man who now was the hindmost perceived that the one who had been in his rear was missing. The fact was told to the decurion. The soldiers all started for the rock. Instinctively they felt that behind it something that demanded attention was taking place.

"To the copse, as fast as you can!" said Kelita. "I will finish this fellow." And with his ever ready dagger he was about to give the fallen soldier a fatal thrust.

"No," said Shobek, "I have done for him," and as he spoke he smote him on the head with the hilt of the sword which the man had dropped. He only stunned him but this was all he meant to do. Terrific fighter though he was when life depended on it, he had not lost his native instincts of mercy.

All this had taken but an instant. The three Hebrews darted to the path and down to the copse well ahead of their enemies; and they found themselves within the shelter of the thicket while the most advanced of their pursuers were a good many paces behind them.

The copse was of walnut trees which grow plentifully in the higher regions of Palestine. Interspersed among them were low-growing bushes which together with the numerous tree trunks made concealment easy in the dark. Through the middle of the copse ran the path in a zigzag course for about a hundred paces. The woods also extended a good hundred paces on each side of it.

"Follow me," said Kelita the moment they were fairly inside the copse. "I know the spot and I know just where we can hide."

He turned abruptly to the right of the trail. Zatthu and Shobek followed. All three stepped with care so as not to give evidence of the direction they were taking. In a short time they came to a point where a low precipitous rocky formation brought the thicket to an end. Feeling his way cautiously, Kelita brought them to a spot where the rock was screened by a thick growth of shrubbery. This he parted and said in a whisper,

"Down on your knees and creep into the hole you will find by feeling. It leads into a cave. I will come after you as soon as I have fixed the bushes so that they will not betray us."

Zatthu crept into the hole; Shobek followed him. A moment later Kelita made his way in after them.

IX

They were in a cave the dimensions of which the inky blackness did not enable them to measure. By groping about Zatthu found it was just high enough to let them stand erect and about ten paces in length by three in breadth.

"How can we ever know when it is safe to go out again?" inquired Zatthu. "The decurion will station men all about, and it would be risking much to crawl out and look around."

"Have no fear," answered Kelita. "There's another way out. And I doubt whether men will be stationed long. They will think we followed the trail, went straight through the wood and out on the other side. However, I mean to get away before they have any idea what has become of us."

"There is another way out, you say?"

"Yes, a low narrow winding way we shall have to crawl through. When we stopped at the goatherd's the first time, I explored the whole country around, as I always do when we make a stay anywhere, so as to be ready for times of danger like this. It was then that I found the entrance to this cave we have just made use of, and I found too that the other end was a passage that led to an outlet on the side of the mountain about thirty paces away."

"We must hurry away. They might find the outlet in the daylight and daylight is coming soon."

"We will be off again before daylight. But we must stop here just a little while. That fellow you spared, Shobek, gave me a wound when he thrust at you. His sword cut through my left arm and opened a vein. I have been losing blood."

This was rather an alarming admission from Kelita, who never thought of himself.

"Is it safe to have a light?" said Shobek, who always carried a flint and steel and some inflammable materials, from which a short-lived torch could be quickly made.

"I fear not," said Kelita. "The shrubbery at the mouth of the cave is dense, yet a glimmer of light might shine through and betray us. We shall have to work in the dark."

So in the pitchy darkness Shobek produced from the pouch he always had with him a rude bandage and bound up Kelita's hurt. A savage hurt it was, a deep cut in the upper left arm. But working under Kelita's directions, Shobek succeeded in stopping the bleeding; and Kelita then declared that they must start at once. But when he tried to stand up and take the lead, he sank back and fell into a doze. The strain and the long wearing life of privation and the loss of blood had made him faint.

Zatthu and Shobek did not dare to rouse him, perilous though the situation was. He slept on for the better part of an hour. Then he awoke with a start, groped about in the dark, came to himself and exclaimed in a tone of alarm,

"How long have I been sleeping?"

"Perhaps half an hour," answered Shobek.

"Why did you let me? I am afraid it is light outside. I must crawl through the passage and see if the way is clear. You two must stay here. You couldn't go as silently as I shall, and to make a noise might spoil everything. If everything is right, I will soon be back. If I don't come back, wait and be watchful. If nothing happens, you will make your way to safety and everything will then be right."

"I can't let you do this," said Zatthu. "You might sacrifice yourself for us."

"What could I do better than that? It would be for the cause. I am going now. But don't fear. All will be well."

Kelita felt his way to the opening at the cave's end. Into it he went and through the narrow passage he crept as noiselessly as a serpent. He was above all things anxious to find out whether the dawn had come. But this it would take some time to discover. Daylight cannot penetrate far into a narrow channel that has a zig-zag course. Before he could ascer-

tain this he knew he was to pass through a portion of the passage which was so much wider and higher as to form another cave, about as long as the one he had left and as wide as it was long. Even this would be pitchy dark, it was so far from the outlet on the side of the mountain.

With confidence he wormed his way along toward this roomier spot. Altogether sure he felt that even if the outlet in the mountain side had been discovered — and he did not believe this possible — no one at any rate had yet penetrated into the dark uninviting channel and found the cavernous spaces to which it led. Still, it was well to be cautious. So he took pains to see that his progress did not create the smallest sound, even as much as the rustle of a garment.

Every now and then he felt above and to one side. After doing this five or six times he found that the passage had become more roomy. This meant that he was near the smaller cave. Just a few feet more of crawling and he would be able to stand upright. But just as he became sure of this, he crouched down and kept absolutely still. A startling sound had reached his ear. It was the deep breathing of some creature. Was that creature a man? Yes, for his keen ear detected a noise that could only be made by the brush of a garment upon a hard surface such as that of a rock.

X

What could it mean? He thought hard as he lay in silence and listened intently. Quickly a conviction smote him. The man whose near presence he had detected was the spy. This man of fox-like cunning had discovered the outlet of the winding passage. It must be daylight outside. The fellow had prowled about, found the hole in the mountain side and crept into it to see whither it led. Plainly he did not know of the entrance to the larger cave that was covered by the shrubbery. He was simply exploring. If he got even a hint that the three fugitives were within his grasp, how eagerly would he worm his way back into the open and tell the Romans what would bring to him a purse of gold.

Just where was he now? Kelita strained his ears to get every movement. The heavy breathing did not sound close by. The brushing of garments against the rocks continued for just a little longer. Then it ceased and a long deep breath that was like a sigh of relief followed. Plainly the man had emerged from the contracted passage and was standing upright. Yes, there could be no doubt of it. His soft catlike tread upon the rocky floor of the cave was just barely audible.

What should Kelita do? One end he had and one only. He wanted to kill the spy. But how? The game was a desperate one — a duel to the death in the dark. For a duel it was sure to be. It would be a miracle if he could strike the man down before making his presence known. Still, he would try.

And the cave, so Kelita reasoned, was the place to do it, not the passage. There he would be more free to act. Perhaps he reasoned mistakenly. Had he lain still and let the man approach him, he could probably have pinioned him down and driven his knife home without danger to himself. But

he was not one to waver between different plans. Promptly he made his choice and promptly he acted upon it. While his enemy was absorbed in finding the extent of the larger space into which he had suddenly come, Kelita crawled forward out of the passage with extremest caution. Every movement was made with perfect self-control and with that measured nicety and exactness with which a cat approaches an unseeing bird. Yet his action had not been slow and in less time than it takes one to count a hundred he was standing erect in the cave without having made his presence known to the man he was determined to kill.

What was his best course now? The man undoubtedly had a knife, but not in his hand. Kelita decided to stand still and wait till his enemy was close to him. Now that the spy was not seriously exerting himself his breathing was too quiet to be heard, but his tread would show when he was within arm's length. In such a nice calculation Kelita's sense of smell would also help him. At just the right moment he would grapple the man, throw him to the ground and despatch him with his knife. It was all hazardous, but he thought it could be done.

So he stood still and waited. The spy — there was never the least doubt in his mind that it was the spy — was plainly making the circuit of the cave and guiding himself as he did so by keeping one or both of his hands upon the wall. He was feeling his way very slowly, but soon Kelita was in no doubt that he was coming towards him. Nearer and nearer he came. At last he got so close that his breathing was once more audible. Kelita waited for him to make just one more step and then threw himself at him to seize him and throw him to the earth.

The effort was rightly timed. Just one thing prevented it from being successful. The man, as he groped his way along, kept so close to the wall that Kelita did not succeed in putting his arms around him. And the fellow had the quick wit that

goes with low cunning. His face was toward the wall, against which he placed both hands and lurched backward with all his might. Had Kelita been able to clasp him around the waist, he could have clung to him in spite of this violent backward thrust. But as he had not grasped him firmly, he was hurled backward with such force that he almost lost his balance. Even while he was recovering it his enemy whirled about and made a savage lunge at him with his knife and then darted back out of reach.

The thrust was not ineffectual. It gave Kelita a wound in the breast which though not dangerous was deep enough to hamper and impede his movements. Moreover the cut in his arm had opened and he was conscious that he was bleeding again. He must think cunningly and act resolutely, or this fight would go against him — and then the fate of Zatthu and Shobek would be sealed.

But his wit did not fail him. He knew he had to do with a knave who had no real stomach for fighting and whose one thought would be to get outside and tell the secret of the cave. This he would prevent. Possessed of a sense of direction that was like that of an animal, he darted across the cave to where he thought the outlet to the open must be, quickly found it and waited there for the coming of the spy.

The spy's own thought he had rightly read. The man's one idea was to find the passage by which he had entered the cave and crawl through into the open with all possible speed. But he did not dare to seek it except by groping his way back along the wall. Exactly this he proceeded to do, and Kelita, as he waited at the outlet, interpreted his movements correctly as he stood and listened. The fellow was feeling his way along and to Kelita's sensitive ear was betraying a nervous haste in doing so.

But all of a sudden his movements stopped. Had he become alarmed at not hearing any sounds made by the one who had attacked him? Or was he now making his way so slowly

and so carefully that his progress did not break the absolute stillness of the cave? Kelita decided that the former was the cause. "He has guessed that I am here," he thought to himself, "and is afraid to encounter me. I must find him then before my strength is spent."

Thinking hard Kelita became sure that the man's posture would be one of defense. So as not to be seized, he would crouch low, with his knife firmly grasped, ready to give a vicious stab the moment he was sure his enemy was upon him. On that carefully reasoned conjecture he would act. It was hazardous to leave the entrance to the outer passage; but act he must or he might swoon from loss of blood.

Stealthily and noiselessly he crept along the wall. By the time he had proceeded twice his own length he perceived that he was close to his enemy. Again his keenness of scent did him service. His plan was already formed. If the man was crouching low, a side push would topple him over and make him a prey to the knife. The moment had come to carry the plan into action.

Again Kelita launched himself against his enemy. Again his conclusions had been sound and his movement perfectly well timed. The spy was crouching low and Kelita's onset stretched him flat on the rocky floor. Exultingly, vindictively Kelita threw himself upon him and drove his knife home, once, twice, thrice.

Then he rose, but he rose only by a masterful effort: and after trying to steady himself for a moment he sank down upon the ground. Even as the spy received Kelita's savage stabs he had put his expiring strength into a thrust with his own keen blade. Kelita had won his victory at the cost of a terrible wound in the side.

"I am dying," he murmured as he lay prone and bleeding. "If Zatthu and Shobek would only come before I am gone! I must warn them or they will be caught. I wonder if I could get to them. No, I couldn't drag myself back. I should die

or lose my senses before I got half-way. Oh, how glad I should be if I heard them coming. I want to say a few things to Zatthu before I die; and I want to be made sure that it was the spy I killed. I should die happier if I knew it was he, he was such a vile wretch and he has pestered us so long."

From sheer exhaustion he stopped speaking. He was so weak that he would have lapsed into unconsciousness but for dogged effort of will. But soon he caught a faint rustling sound in the passage. It grew more and more distinct, and he still had life enough to be thrilled at the thought that he was to speak with his friends once more. Lonely, secretive and vengeful, he had a burning passionate nature. Zatthu had roused all the affection and all the devotion he had to give. The cause had been to him sacred. To die for its leader was a joy.

"I am here," he said as soon as he was sure that at least one of the two had emerged from the narrow passage: "but I am badly hurt. Strike a light and come close to me."

"Badly hurt, Kelita?" inquired Zatthu anxiously; for he and Shobek were both now standing up in the cave. "Oh, I cannot believe that. We will come and help you right away."

By this time Shobek had lighted one of the tiny torches he carried. By the light of it he and Zatthu knelt down by the stricken hunchback with the deepest solicitude. Before they could do or say anything, he spoke again.

"The wound is in my side," he said, "but do not look for it. You can see that I am near my end. I met the spy in here. I killed him, but he gave me my death wound. But look and see if it was really he. I shall die happier for knowing it."

Zatthu and Shobek took a hurried glance at the corpse closeby, which they had barely noticed before, so wholly did Kelita fill their thoughts.

"It was he," said Shobek, "but he'll never do any more harm."

"I am glad of that. I hope I shan't see him in Sheol. But

the Romans will soon miss him. They may find their way in here as he did. Get away at once before they trap you. Goodbye."

The dying man gave Zatthu a look of deep affection and closed his eyes.

"Kelita," cried Zatthu in anguish of spirit, "it breaks my heart to lose you. And you have given your life for me!"

"For you . . . and for the cause," said Kelita opening his eyes again while a smile came over his face. "I . . . was . . . glad . . . to do it."

The eyes closed again. In a few moments he was gone. Overcome with grief Zatthu sat by his side in silence till Shobek said,

"It is hard to leave him here, but his caution was wise. We may be trapped if we linger here. If the spy could find his way in here, others may do the same."

"We could kill them one by one if they did. Why not stay till night comes again?"

"I dare not try it. We might kill one Roman if he made his way in here, but the place would be known. They would guard the opening and guard the copse. We should have to surrender or starve."

"Let us crawl to the outlet then and make a dash for freedom. But I've no heart for anything now that Kelita is gone."

XI

The torch had showed the entrance to the outer passage. Through the narrow winding channel Shobek crept, with Zatthu close behind him. After they had made two sharp turns they had a faint glimpse of daylight. Two turns more brought them to the opening in the side of the mountain.

Very cautiously Shobek peered forth. No one was in sight, but his view was quite contracted. Crawling out on his hands and knees he ensconced himself in a low growth of shrubbery close to the opening. Thence he was able to take in the lower side of the copse opposite to that which he and Zatthu and Kelita had entered the previous night. Two soldiers emerged from the copse, looked about and went back again.

They are watching the trail on both sides of the copse," Shobek argued. "Probably they are guarding the copse on every side, thinking we have found a hiding place in it. But I think I can outwit them."

He made his way back to Zatthu and proposed his plan. It was that he should show himself so as to attract the attention of the soldiers, draw them all in pursuit of him and that Zatthu should then go in a different direction when no one was on the lookout for him.

"I will not suffer it," said Zatthu. "Kelita has given his life for me. You shall not give yours."

"But this is the safest course for both of us. Alone I can leave them far behind when they pursue me. If you were with me they might overtake us and we should have to fight."

"I can run fast too. It is not for nothing that I have been speeding up hill and down through these long months."

"But the Roman soldiers are all well trained and you are worn by this life and by all the discouragements you have had. I can see you are. My plan, I tell you, is the safe one. I am going to act upon it. I am going to dash up the moun-

tain, for I can keep my breath when I run up hill, and they will soon lose theirs. When they have started after me, do you take the path down the hill and make your way to Gischiaia. I'll find you there tomorrow or the day after that."

Zatthu resisted no longer. He was, as Shobek said, much worn by his life of excitement and constant journeying; against Shobek's insistency he was not proof. He ended the discussion by saying wearily,

"I am tired of having my friends sacrifice themselves for me. But it shall be as you say."

The sun was about an hour high. They had brought food with them from the goatherd's and they now partook of it. Water they wished but for that they must wait. Their hunger satisfied, Shobek got Zatthu to station himself in the shrubbery near the opening, whence he could watch the course of things. He himself proceeded to carry out his part of the program: but he did not do it exactly as he had given Zatthu reason to expect.

He thought it extremely unlikely that the whole detachment of soldiers would start in pursuit of him the moment he was seen. The decurion, if he was a man of intelligence, would send some of his men to overtake him but would hold part of them back to be on the watch for the other fugitives. It must be Shobek's part to create confusion and get the interest of all so centered on himself that Zatthu could steal away unnoticed. This meant danger to himself, but of that he recked not. And he did not consider the danger great. One thing he noted when the soldiers filed by the night before. They had no spears. He could come to close quarters with them without fear of being struck down by a missile.

So instead of making straight for the path he stole cautiously toward the copse itself. As he crept noiselessly along he armed himself with two good-sized stones which he easily carried in his huge left hand. On the upper side of the copse were two men pacing back and forth, not very near to each

other and not closely observant. Stealing up behind the nearest of these, he made a quick onset, took him unawares and threw him violently to the ground. Then with a loud shout he rushed at the other sentinel who was hurrying to the assistance of his stunned and prostrate comrade.

Seeing this tall powerful figure dashing at him like a demon and yelling as he did so, the Roman, doubtless rather surprised than alarmed, slowed his pace and stood on the defensive. This was just what Shobek wanted. When he was hardly more than arm's length away he hurled one of his stones with terrific force. It struck the man squarely in the breastplate and sent him reeling to the earth.

By this time all the Romans in the copse were hurrying into the open. Still shouting, Shobek dashed at the nearest one and felled him with the second stone. Then he dashed up the mountain side for a few paces, but only to turn again. He wanted to make such a diversion that Zatthu could be absolutely sure of escaping observation as he made his own start down the mountain. Picking up another stone he rushed at the man who was foremost in the pursuit. He too quailed. Roman discipline had not trained its soldiers to face such a mad antagonist who fought according to no recognized rules of warfare. This man also reeled backward under the force of the rocky missile. Before he could recover himself and before any of his comrades could get at Shobek with their swords, he was off again and bounding up the mountain side like a deer.

So absorbed had Zatthu been in watching this strange encounter that he almost neglected his own opportunity to escape. But as he saw Shobek finally dart away without turning back, he realized that it was quite time for him to act. So he stole out of the shrubbery toward the trail. The descent was at this point sharp. The ground screened him from sight, and the trail was not far off. From the lower

side of the copse it wound directly toward the shrubbery in which he had been hiding.

Reaching the trail, he paused a moment and looked around. He was now behind a spur which hid from view the upper side of the copse and all that was happening there. He could only conjecture that Shobek was distancing his pursuers. But the lower side of the copse was in sight. No Roman however was to be seen there. Shobek's manœuvre had plainly engrossed the attention of all the soldiers. Confidently Zatthu started at a swift pace down the trail.

His confidence would have been disturbed had he looked around just before the trail made a final turn that hid him from view. For had he done so he would have seen one of the soldiers setting forth in pursuit of him. It was indeed the same one who had discovered the three behind the rock the night before. His head still suffered from the terrific blow Shobek had dealt him, but he was by no means disabled and with the rest he had started after Shobek when the big Hebrew had made his diversion in Zatthu's favor. But he was quick-witted and he soon saw it was a ruse. Where were the other two fugitives, for three in all there were known to be? He rushed down to the lower edge of the copse and peered eagerly forth. There to his great satisfaction he got sight of the vanishing Zatthu. Without waiting to report his discovery he dashed down the mountain to overtake him.

Running rapidly for a while Zatthu passed into an extensive tract of woodland that covered the lower part of the mountain. Here he felt that he was really safe and so let his run become a walk.

But hardly had he done so before he heard rapid steps behind him. Could this be Shobek? He looked round to ascertain. The trail was too winding to let him see his pursuer perfectly, but he caught the gleam of armor through the trees. No, it was not Shobek. It was one of the Romans.

Perhaps others were coming directly after him. He must try to outdistance them.

He was fleet of foot and he ran swiftly. But the Roman was fleetier still. The footsteps were plainly coming nearer. Should he then run at the very height of his speed? That would be folly, for in a very short time he would be utterly out of breath. He must trust in Jehovah; and as his prayer mounted to the God of his people he thought how Asahel followed after Abner and met a sorrowful end. For "Asahel was as light of foot as a wild roe. And Asahel pursued after Abner, and in going he turned not to the right hand nor to the left from following Abner. Then Abner looked behind him and said, Art thou Asahel? And he answered, I am. And Abner said to him, Turn thee aside to thy right hand or to thy left, and lay thee hold on one of the young men, and take thee his armour. . . . Howbeit he refused to turn aside; wherefore Abner with the hinder end of the spear smote him under the fifth rib, that the spear came out behind him; and he fell down there and died."

Without repeating all of these words as they are written in Samuel, Zatthu recalled vividly the story and felt that it should guide his own course of action, strange though that action might seem. So, as his pursuer gained on him, he turned about and in the name of Jehovah bade him stop. His command was of course received with astonishment and utterly disregarded. Indeed it only served to make the Roman increase his speed. A second time Zatthu uttered his behest. A second time it was unheeded and the steps drew very near. There was naught for Zatthu to do but follow Abner's example.

He looked back and saw that his pursuer was scarcely three paces behind him. Drawing his sword he darted nimbly to one side and made a half turn as he did so. The Roman too had unsheathed his own weapon in preparation for the conflict he saw coming; but he had no chance to use it. Zatthu's

movement was so sudden and unexpected that the Roman could not on the instant turn and guard himself. His impetus carried him along and with a powerful stroke Zatthu smote him on the shoulderblade as he was passing by. The sword cut deep. Zatthu could not withdraw it, and the man, after making a brave effort to stay himself, fell upon the ground.

Zatthu would gladly have seen a whole host of Romans swallowed by an earthquake or laid low by the avenging swords of Israel; but he had no heart for a murderous single combat such as this. He bent over the man in pity.

"I am sorry I had to lift my hand against you," he said. "Is your hurt deadly?"

"You cut deep. I have not long to live," the Roman answered, opening the eyes which weakness had made him close.

"Are you suffering much?"

"I am too faint to feel much pain. But I thirst; oh, how I thirst. A draft of water would make me die happy."

"You shall have it. There is water near. I can just hear the ripple of a stream."

Zatthu undid the soldier's helmet and carefully removed it. Dashing into the woods he quickly brought it back full of clear cool water and helped the Roman to drink. The wounded man murmured his thanks, and was so far revived that after a moment he spoke.

"It was I," he said, "who discovered you and your comrades behind the rock last night. Would I had not done so. I have only brought about my own death and you will go free. You always escape us. I believe that strange God you worship protects you."

"He surely does. Sometime He will give us the strength to vanquish Rome."

"I do not see how that can be. Rome is too great. But I am growing too weak to talk. You have slain me, but you have been kind and I bear you no ill will. Almost do I hope

that you will not be taken. You would be crucified if you fell into our hands."

"You are a brave man and a good one. Would that you had not followed me and come to your death."

The soldier smiled feebly and closed his eyes. In a few moments he drew one last deep breath and passed away.

Zatthu had been kneeling beside him. He made sure that no spark of life remained and then looked at the calm dead face remorsefully. It weighed upon his soul that he had brought a brave man to his end. Questions began to crowd in upon his mind. This man was a Roman and a heathen. But he was brave; he had been forgiving. Would the mighty Jehovah have no compassion for this soul that had passed into the vast unknowable beyond?

But this was no time for such reflections. He would cover the man with earth. That rite of decency he fairly owed him. Then he would hasten on his way.

With a strong effort that he made with much inward shrinking he pulled his sword from the body and took a few steps into the wood. Hastily he made a shallow grave by scraping away the leaves and the soil beneath them and went back to the path. He was stooping over to lift up the body, when he was startled by a shout. Looking up he saw three more of the Romans hastening toward him. They had been trotting easily along; their footsteps had not been heavy; absorbed as he was in his self-imposed honorable service to a fallen foe, he had not heard their approach.

He drew his sword. He would not fly; neither would he be captured. If this was to be the end, let it come. His soul was weary through long waiting, hairbreadth escapes, and hope endlessly deferred. Planting himself against a stout oak he made ready for the death wound that was sure to come.

"Yield your sword," cried one of the Romans, as the three stood facing him.

"You can have it when you have killed me."

"We would not kill you. We only want to capture you. We are three to one. Surrender."

"And be crucified? Never."

Thus answering, Zatthu struck fiercely at the man who was nearest. The stroke was parried and the fight began. For Zatthu it had but one object, to be killed. But this was exactly what his opponents wished not to do. Their thrusts and blows were feebly given. Their aim was to inflict mere flesh wounds that would cause exhaustion. Perceiving this Zatthu fought like a demon to force them into giving the deadly Roman stab. He was no mean swordsman. He was roused to fury and he put all his strength into long sweeping strokes that parried the ineffectual thrusts made at him and into vigorous blows at any one who came well within his reach.

But the fight was too unequal to last long. He received two troublesome though not dangerous wounds. He realized that one or two more would bring him to the ground helpless but without a mortal hurt; and the thought maddened him to fight with still greater desperation. Almost like a circle of light his sword flew around him and almost incessant was its clang upon the swords or breastplates of his foes, when the fight came to an end as suddenly as it had begun.

Leaping up, as it seemed to Zatthu's astonished eyes, from the very ground, a tall figure assailed the three Romans from behind. Two were thrown violently to the earth before they could realize what was happening and the third received a disabling blow on the sword arm. Instantly his sword was snatched from his feeble grasp; and the swords of the other two were also seized, their owners not having been able to clasp them securely as they crashed upon the ground. And then, to complete his triumph, the alert Shobek — for Shobek it was who had made such a timely appearance — possessed himself of the blade of the dead soldier whose body was still lying close at hand.

The two fallen men rose slowly to their feet. All three of the

Romans stood cowed and discomfited. They were ashamed to give up the contest, yet they had no weapons with which to fight. And what did it avail to fight with this terrible enemy who was like some fiend in human guise? For in the towering figure before them they recognized the man who had escaped from them only half an hour earlier after overpowering two or three of their number, and whose deeds of prowess were told and wonderfully magnified in all the Roman posts of Palestine.

"Go!" said this awesome enemy as they stood hesitating. "Go!" he repeated in a loud commanding voice. "This man you would capture is protected by the God of Israel. You cannot harm him."

"We are not afraid of Israel's God," said one of the men sullenly, "but a man can't stand up against a demon like you."

"I am but a man as you are, but my people's God Jehovah gives me power to strike down every hand that is raised against this savior of my nation. So go! I am tired of killing Romans."

The taunt kindled a faint spark of resistance. The men looked questioningly at each other. But no one of them had any heart to renew the fray.

"We will go," said the spokesman, "but my comrade's wound must be cared for first and this other, whom your friend seems to have done to death, must be buried."

"You shall do both things. We Hebrews have hearts. We are sorry for the wounded; we respect the dead."

"Amen to that!" said Zatthu. "He was a brave man. His grave is dug. It is ready for him yonder," and he pointed into the woods.

One of the Romans tore strips from his tunic and the wounded arm was bound so as to stop the bleeding. Then the two who were unhurt lifted their dead comrade and guided by Zatthu placed him in the shallow grave. Shobek and

Zatthu stood by as the earth was placed over the body. All thought of strife and enmity was banished by the solemnity of the scene.

When the rude burial was completed, the three Romans looked wonderingly at their conquerors, as if they would fain see how these men of a despised race could overpower the trained legionaries of Rome. Then with slow dogged steps they took their unwilling course toward the copse on the side of the mountain.

XII

"Where did you come from, Shobek?" inquired Zatthu, as soon as it was apparent that the Romans would trouble them no more. "If David or Gideon had suddenly appeared, I should not have been more astounded."

"I will tell you when I have looked to those wounds of yours. You are bleeding. Let me see how much you are hurt."

"It isn't serious," he said after a brief examination. "That cut below the thigh will make you limp when you walk, and that stab in the armpit would have been a nasty one had it gone a little deeper. But I will dress both the hurts and stop their bleeding."

This was quickly done and the two then sat down beneath the oak which had given Zatthu protection in his fray with the three harassing assailants.

"My story is a simple one," began Shobek in answer to the question Zatthu had put to him. "I soon outran my pursuers — all but one. Him I faced and bore down upon with all my might. He thrust savagely at me as I got within arm's length, but I knocked up his sword and sent him sprawling. Looking back as I ran on again, I saw him rise and limp back toward his comrades. Then I hastened along, passed the goatherd's, reached the top of the mountain and took the downward path. But having shaken off my pursuers, I veered off in the direction of the copse to see if I could be of help to you. After a time I came to a point where the trail I knew you must be following was visible just before it passes into these woods. Passing along it at no very rapid pace, I saw our three friends who have just parted from us so unwillingly. That means mischief, I thought; and I clambered rapidly down to the edge of the woods that I might hurry through them and strike the trail. Soon the ring of

swords faintly struck my ear. The sound guided me and — well, you know the rest.”

“I know you reached me in the nick of time. Those fellows were really playing with me, for they were sure they had me at their mercy. If they had tried hard enough, they would have had me down before you came. As to the one who lies buried yonder, I got the better of him by stepping quickly to one side just as he overtook me, and smiting my sword deep into his shoulder close to the neck. I was just going to carry him to the grave I had made when the other three bore down upon me.”

“The one you killed, then, was a good way ahead of his fellows?”

“Yes, he was the one who discovered us behind the rock last night. I talked with him a little before he died. He must have spied me and dashed off in pursuit.”

“And the other three, no doubt, were sent on by the decurion after the first who got track of you was missed.”

“They must have missed the spy long since. I wonder if they will find out what became of him.”

“I hardly think it. They will think we have all escaped and give up the search. A hundred years hence perhaps some one will find the two skeletons in the cave and wonder how they came there.”

“I am grieved at heart when I think of Kelita. He gave his life for me. He was always faithful and true.”

“Remember, he gave it gladly. It was for the cause. Every true Hebrew would do the same. But we must not talk any more. We must go on our way before your wounds are stiff. The Romans may yet come after us again.”

“Shall we go to Gischaia?”

“We will go in that direction. Somewhere in these northern hills of Galilee we must hide ourselves till this little storm is spent. Perhaps some new place of shelter will show itself.”

They started forth, keeping a watchful eye on the path

behind them and progressing slowly, for Zatthu's wounded leg made rapid motion painful. The trail soon brought them to a rough road along which they proceeded some two miles. Finding a shady spot they rested several hours while the sun was high and made a midday meal from the food they had brought from the goatherd's, but the last of which they now consumed. They had lost all fear of pursuit and saw no reason for hurrying.

Late in the afternoon they resumed their journeying. The road they were following skirted the base of the mountain on which they had had such a series of adventures and then wound its way upward into the higher lands. When they reached the point where they had to climb, their progress became very slow. Though supported by his stalwart comrade Zatthu walked with much difficulty.

"We shall not reach Gischaia tonight," said Shobek, after they had mounted a short distance. "But no matter. I had not expected it. The town is several miles away. We must find shelter in some friendly hut like that of the goatherd."

"These hills are wooded. We shall find no dwellings in them."

"Oh, yes, we shall. We shall come to open stretches where the land is tilled and sheep and goats find pasture. It is hard to walk with such an ugly wound. But courage! We have been in worse straits than this."

"I do not mind the pain and I have no fears for myself. I am only thinking how I bring trouble to my friends — and all for nothing."

"Drive all such thoughts away. Our cause is Jehovah's. It must win."

They climbed on in silence. The sun was now very low. Trees of a goodly size lined the road on either side and kept it in deep shadow. Just as they made a sharp turn in it they were confronted by three men who stepped out from the thick-growing forest.

"Stop," said one of them, "and give up your money."

"What if we have none?" questioned Shobek.

"Then everything that's worth money."

"What if we choose to fight?"

"Your friend is lame. You are no match for three."

"Be not too sure. I have laid low more than three, single-handed."

"But not more than ten."

Thereupon the man gave a shrill whistle and his allies began to emerge from the woods. The band mustered twelve in all — every one of them unkempt, coarsely clad, with a sullen face that bespoke a lawless mind and a burning sense of wrong.

"Now I think you'll have no stomach for fighting," said the leader with a grim smile.

"No," said Zatthu, "we have no wish to fight. Why should men fight who are brothers in arms?"

"Brothers? What do you mean?"

"Would not Rome crucify you if it caught you?"

"Yes, and it would waste no time in doing it."

"It would do the same to me and to this friend of mine."

"Why? What have you done?"

"I have stirred up strife against Rome. We have both of us killed Roman soldiers."

"Ah, you are Zatthu then. Yes, I know you now," said the outlaw coming close and peering into Zatthu's face. "We have met before."

"Yes, we have met before, for you are Barabbas."

"You remember me then?"

"Yes, I placed you as soon as you spoke. I do not easily forget a voice."

"And you must bear in mind that our meeting brought me and my friends nothing good. You took from me the plunder that was within my grasp."

"Yes, I kept you from doing one deed of violence. Have you not done enough?"

"Look at us and see," said Barabbas with a grim laugh. "Would you say we were in the lap of plenty?"

Zatthu did not answer at once. He scrutinized the whole band for a moment and then said,

"You look as if the life you led brought you little but misery and want. Why not change it? If I raised the banner of insurrection, would you march under it?"

"Would it bring us spoil and plenty of it?"

"Perhaps; but it would bring you something better — freedom. Speak, all of you! Do you not hate Rome?"

"Yes, yes," came the answer, like a hoarse growl, from every throat.

"Then let us make common cause against this hateful foe that has taken our liberty away and would crucify us if it got us in its cruel grasp."

The men did not know how to answer this appeal but looked to their leader. He shook his head and said,

"We'll fight Rome when we see you heading an army that will drive these cursed Romans into the Dead Sea. Go and raise it. By good rights you ought to hand over to me all the money you've got and everything that's worth money, you did me and my fellows such an ill turn at the foot of Carmel. But we won't rob you. We have some feeling for a man Rome wants to crucify. Go your way."

"No, let us go your way. I cannot walk much farther, and I want food and shelter for the night."

"You talk of overthrowing Rome and you ask a band of outlaws to take you in! That does not look to me like breaking the Roman power. But so be it. We'll share what we have with you; but we don't sit down to a feast or sleep in a palace. Come this way."

XIII

Leaning on Shobek Zatthu limped painfully after Barabbas and his crew as they took their course through the forest. But the outlaws walked slowly out of regard to Zatthu's condition. Two or three of them even offered to make him a litter. But this he would not let them do. He knew he could best win a place in their regard by making light of pain and hardship.

In less than an hour they came to the lair of the robbers. It was an open space in the dense woodland growth, surrounded by a screen of rocks and high up in the hills. Here the men had built rude huts that protected them from inclement weather, and in one of these Zatthu was made as comfortable as this barren and primitive manner of living allowed. Food of a coarse kind was not lacking. The outlaws were expert hunters and brought in all manner of game. With the money they wrested from unfortunate wayfarers they bought grain from those who raised it and rudely ground it themselves. It was a law with them not to rob and plunder the poor. Those who tilled a scanty patch or raised a few sheep and goats were exempt from their depredations.

Able to rest and relieved from immediate anxiety Zatthu recovered from his hurts. Yet the recovery was slow. His mind was not tranquil and his body was in a worn and feverish state. Long hours he lay still and brooded over all that had happened since the iron hand of Rome was laid on him in the streets of Jerusalem. More than once he had been delivered, miraculously delivered it would seem, from deadly peril. Did this point to the protecting care of Israel's God? It must be so. And yet what had he really accomplished in these weary months of waiting, hiding, darting from place to place and uttering fervent appeals to a faint-hearted people?

Nothing; really nothing. That was the bitter fact he had to face.

His star, which to his own eager trustful vision had risen brightly, was now very dim. The star of another was shining with an ever growing lustre. Wherever he went he found what was brought home to him so forcibly at Safed — Jesus of Nazareth had won the people's hearts. Had he been wholly mistaken in his judgment of this man? Could it really be that this friend of the publicans and the unclean, this worker of cures through some strange art, this stealer of men's hearts through subtle speech, was Jehovah's messenger to a down-trodden people? He could not think it. He could not think it. Yet Jesus of Nazareth's power was growing daily while his had become like a sapling leveled in a storm.

Thoughts like these sometimes rushed in upon him like a tide. Made despondent, almost despairing, by them, he would then let his mind dwell on the happy days he spent in the home of Aristarchus. He felt the spell of Thisoa's ardor, Thisoa's beauty, Thisoa's charm. Feeling surged up in him and swayed him mightily. It told him in peremptory commanding tones that he had chosen wrong. His own conceit had misled him utterly. He had thought to be another Moses; he found himself only a common man. Not for him the mighty deed and the acclaim of a triumphant people, but only a quiet peaceful home. Yes, only a home, but what joy, what ecstacy there was in that simple thought! There his wife would be "as a fruitful vine," his children would grow up in the fear of Jehovah, and measureless blessing would crown every passing year. There he would have such daily companionship and such unfailing sympathy as the high-spirited daughter of Aristarchus had given him day by day. In such moods he longed for Thisoa with an agonized longing, even as he had done when he looked forth from the hill crest in the moonlight and saw the gleaming waters of Gennesaret.

But too entire had been his consecration to his lofty pur-

pose to be easily or quickly set aside. When these tides of feeling mastered him they were again succeeded by states of penitence in which he condemned himself unsparingly for losing his faith in Jehovah and Jehovah's cause. Self-reproachful, he would then talk with Shobek, who was never wanting in courage and calm confidence; and he mingled with the outlaws and listened to their talk. From time to time, he found, they shifted their place of refuge to avoid discovery. When they attacked the caravan of Aristarchus their lair was on the wooded slopes of Carmel. But prying bands of Roman soldiers forced them to find quarters elsewhere; and for some time they had made this well-sheltered spot in northern Galilee their vantage ground.

Zatthu studied them and lent a ready ear to their tales. Their unwillingness to rob the poor he noted with approval. For every sign that pointed to kindness and good feeling he looked eagerly. For he was trying to persuade himself that Jehovah himself had guided him to this band of outcasts. Ever the thought of David and the cave of Adullam came to his mind. There David gathered the needy, the broken and the adventurous and made himself a captain over them. Was not he, Zatthu, to turn these outcasts into followers of himself and swell the little company into an army of patriots burning to free Zion from the tyranny of Rome? He tried hard to think so. He forced himself to think so. And then, when by sheer persistency of will he had anchored himself in this conviction, the thought of Thisoa would flood in overwhelmingly and he would long for her in the very inmost of his soul.

Thus faith warred with feeling in a wearing, never ceasing conflict. But the faith grew fainter and the feeling more insurgent as the days went by.

XIV

A whole month passed and still Zattu lingered with the outlaws. It was now the early part of Zif, the English May, when the country was green from the spring rains and the harvest fields were ripening. The freshness of the vegetation, and the genial air of spring would have tempted Zattu to be active once again had his old-time zeal still glowed within him. But its fire was so nearly dead that he preferred to spend his time in talking with Barabbas and his followers instead of planning how to renew his wonted activities.

With Barabbas he had many a long interview. He was grateful to him for burying the past instead of exacting vengeance for Zattu's interference in behalf of Aristarchus. The man was not indeed hard to read. He had adopted without any reserve or exceptions the outlaw's code. With the social and political order he was at war. Deep in his mind was the conviction which in every civilized land has turned men into criminals — the conviction that the state owes the individual a generous subsistence, but the individual owes nothing to the state. This idea well fixed, the natural thing is for the individual to help himself if the state will not live up to its obligation. So feeling and so thinking, Barabbas was proceeding to help himself; but he did so without rancor or vindictiveness. Beneath his surliness was a rough kindness that made him befriend the poor and sometimes even pity the men he robbed. "This man," thought Zattu, "would have cleaved to King David and respected him for cutting off his sovereign's skirt instead of killing him when he was sleeping in the cave."

More interesting were others of the outlaw band whose natures were more complex and whose minds were not so easily fathomed. There was Amok, dubbed "the Smiler" by his comrades, who made a jest of everything and kept the whole

crew in laughter. Was there any serious vein below this light-heartedness? Zatthu thought there was and after many talks with the fellow he felt sure that he had found it. Again there was Zichri the taciturn, known as "Tight-shut," whom he had to labor much with to get him to speak at all. But he did at last draw him out and he satisfied himself that there was in him a sense of loyalty which would make him go through pain and want rather than betray a comrade, and which could, in a great national uprising, be kindled into loyalty to the state. And then, most interesting of all, there was the churlish, fierce and truculent Mispereth, not inaptly called Beelzebub. For this man's appearance was as forbidding as his speech, and his speech was always vituperative and harsh. He had a low brow, a cruel cunning eye, and features that were coarse and repulsive even through his heavy beard. When a foray was planned, Mispereth demanded with many oaths that no mercy should be shown to the victims of their raid however defenceless they might be. When they returned, he gloated over the gains if they were large and cursed those who had been robbed if their possessions had been scanty and unsatisfying. Once, after a man had been killed for resisting, and some who had been concerned in the foul deed had expressed a mild regret, Mispereth accused them of cowardice and expressed a savage delight in the atrocious murder.

It was Zatthu's belief that even in this man there existed some spark of human feeling. He could not be wholly and absolutely vile. Long he worked to see the spark glimmer and to kindle it into a glow. And at last he found it. Mispereth really had a tender feeling for children. This Zatthu discovered with great difficulty, for it was far from easy to make him talk. But he persisted in seeking him out and questioning him so freely that the man could not help responding, however grudgingly; and finally he elicited from him comments that showed the one soft spot in his stony nature.

And the feeling, so hard to discern, found expression one day when the band returned from a successful but happily a bloodless expedition. As the assault upon a small party of wayfarers was discussed, Mispereth said: "I'd have stabbed that fellow that struggled so hard if it had not been for that boy of his. But I didn't want to make the little chap cry."

Having become more of a student of men than a reforming zealot, Zatthu spent many hours in this savage man's company. Sometimes the man was very gruff and repellant. Sometimes he seemed to melt a little and to show a liking for a human intercourse such as he had certainly never had before. Little by little, Zatthu flattered himself, he was finding a way to his heart.

One night after he had spent a little more than a month with these strange associates, he was wakened from sleep a little after midnight by Shobek. The two had for their own shelter a small hut which Shobek had himself constructed and which was a little more impervious to wind and rain than the lodgings put together by the outlaws. As only they two were in it, they could speak in low tones and move about quietly without attracting attention.

"Wake up," said Shobek in a whisper as he shook Zatthu lightly. "Wake up, but make no noise. We are in danger."

Zatthu was wide awake and alert in an instant.

"What is wrong?" he whispered.

"These men whom you have been trying to make friends of are going to betray you. You know I have warned you a good many times that they could not be trusted."

"I know you have, but I felt sure I was getting their liking. Are they all turning against me?"

"Not all. Enough to carry out their plan."

"Who's hatched the plan? Barabbas?"

"No, Mispereth. I don't believe Barabbas himself knows of it or would fall in with it."

"But they could carry it through in spite of him?"

"Yes."

"How do you know?"

"I have been watching Mispereth and growing more and more suspicious of him for several days. He has been much with some of the worst of this crew and I was sure they were plotting something. After dark tonight I crept back of the hut that Mispereth and his two special comrades sleep in. It is full of cracks and holes like all these shanties. I put my ear to a small opening and listened. Their talk was alarming, I can assure you; but it grew more so. Five more of the crew came to the hut, one by one. When they were all there, the plan was talked over bit by bit. As they don't want a fight, they are going to come here in the early morning and overpower both of us before we are fully roused and bind us fast. Then they will take us to some Roman post, and get the reward that has been offered for us both."

"But Rome wants them, too. They would be seized and put to death."

"They will be too cunning. They know their danger and will not put themselves in the power of Rome without making sure that their crimes will be forgiven because of the captives they deliver up. I think they mean to take us to Capernaum. Marcus has such a name for honor and fair dealing that they would trust him to stand by any word he gave them."

"Well, let them carry out their plan. Perhaps the best thing that could happen to you and me would be to fall into the hands of Marcus."

"No! That must not be. I am ready to meet any death that may come to me from being true to the cause. But it is foolish to throw life away. Marcus is generous and merciful. He may have influence with Pilate. But he is a Roman officer, and even though he saved us from crucifixion he could not save us from death."

"The heart is gone out of me, Shobek. Now that these men whom I thought I had made friends of have turned

against me, I feel ready to die. I wish you would save yourself and leave me here."

"Why talk so foolishly? You know I would not do that."

"Yes, I know it. You are as faithful as Jonathan was to David. You won't desert me, so I must follow you. I see there is no other way. Well, what shall we do? How can we get away?"

"I have got it all arranged. I would not dare to steal out by the path through the opening in this circle of rock. They may be on the watch for us. I think it likely they have their eyes on this little dwelling of ours even now to make sure we have not in some way got wind of their plan and foiled it. But foil it we will. I have fixed some of the timbers on the back side of the hut, which almost leans against the cliff, so that they can be moved aside without any noise. We will creep out through the opening I make and scale the cliff. That won't be difficult. You will find a cord hanging fast to a tree near the edge of the rock."

"When did you do that?"

"An hour ago. But there's no need to say anything more now. It is time to act."

The preparations for departure were quickly made. They had to be simple for two who were living with almost the simplicity of savages. When they were ready, Shobek carefully and noiselessly pushed the rough-hewn logs aside and he and Zatthu crept out under the open sky. It was very dark; no stars were shining; they had little fear of being seen. Shobek helped Zatthu to find the rope and compelled him to mount up first. The ascent successfully made, Shobek followed him. Reaching the edge of the cliff, which was some twenty cubits high, he stopped and listened. Not a sound was to be heard. The escape had so far been effected without creating any alarm. The cord was drawn up and unfastened that it might be of avail in future emergencies, and they were ready to plunge into the depths of the forest.

"Which way shall we go?" asked Zatthu whose despondent mood made him glad to leave the direction of their wandering to his companion.

"I think to Jotapata," was Shobek's answer. "It's a populous town with its two score thousands; and there are times when one can hide best in a crowd. So we will turn our steps in that direction; but we need not hurry. It will be three hours or so before those scoundrels find that they have lost their chance to claim the reward that was so tempting to them."

"Tell me one thing more, Shobek. Were Amok and Zichri among those who were going to deliver me up to Rome?"

"Yes, both of them. I should not have told you if you had not asked me; but they were in the plot."

Zatthu said nothing. With a heavy heart he looked down on the spot, now nothing but a mass of gloom, which had at once given him shelter and all but wrought his doom. Then he turned and followed Shobek into the forest blackness. His tread was heavy. Despair was in his soul. He felt that in turning from this den of thieves he was saying goodbye to the cause to which he had pledged a measureless devotion. Everything had failed. As a very last resource he had come to a Cave of Adullam; and that had failed. Jehovah had not counted him worthy to redeem his afflicted people.

PART V
WAITING

I

Less than a month after Zatthu and Shobek made their midnight flitting from Barabbas' lair, Thisoa one afternoon received from Nikon the intelligence that a visitor had appeared.

The intelligence was not unwelcome. Except for the servants she was alone in the house. Her father and mother had gone to Tiberias, further down on the lake shore, for a three days' visit with friends living there. She was missing them much and the roll of the Fifth Book of the Iliad, with which she was trying to entertain herself as she sat in the atrium by the plashing waters of the fountain, awakened but a languid interest. Her thought was far away in the Galilean hills.

"Who is it, Nikon?" she inquired.

"One whom I think you will be pleased to see," answered Nikon with an old servitor's freedom. "It is the big Hebrew, Shobek."

"Shobek," she exclaimed, her dullness of spirit instantly replaced by a joyous anticipation. "Bring him in here at once."

Nikon withdrew, in a slightly wondering mood. He could not read the mind of his young mistress and know that she wanted to hear news of Zatthu there in the very spot where he had more than once sat by her side and shared his thought with her. Shobek had been in the house but once before, but he was not to be met formally in the room where strangers were received.

Thisoa's face beamed as she greeted him.

"How good you are to come to us again," she said. "This time I hope it is good news you bring — but no! As I look at you and see how grave you are, I fear something is amiss. Pray seat yourself at once and tell me all."

"I have reason to be grave," said Shobek, very solemnly and slowly. "There is much amiss."

"Tell me all and waste no words. I must know the truth."

"Zatthu is very, very ill."

"Even to death?"

"Yes, even to death. I left him very low this morning. Even now he may not be alive."

"There was no hope whatever when you left him?"

"No hope. No, it grieves me to say it, but there was absolutely none."

Thisoa was too sorely stricken to speak at once. Her breath came in gasps and her face was white. Shobek understood and respected her mood. With eyes downcast he waited for her to speak. Presently she said faintly,

"Did you leave him with Kelita?"

"Alas! Kelita was killed in saving Zatthu and myself two months ago."

Again there was a brief silence. Then Thisoa found strength to say,

"You must tell me the story, but tell it quickly. Zatthu shall not die. He must and shall be saved. But first I must know what has happened and why he lies so near to death."

Shobek therefore straightway began his story. Realizing himself that he must omit much more than he told, he briefly pictured the life he and his two friends had been living; how they had roamed over the hills of Palestine from north to south; how they had been hunted and harried and more than once had only escaped capture through Kelita's vigilance and subtle sense of danger; how the spy had been ever on their tracks and had at last forced them to seek refuge in the cavernous passage where Kelita had met his death; how he, Shobek, and Zatthu had then eluded pursuit by consorting with Barabbas and his band of outlaws; and how even that hiding-place had failed them and Zatthu had left it utterly broken in spirit.

"Yes, the heart had gone out of him," said Shobek, as he brought his narrative to its close. "When I got him safely out of that den and led him to Jotapata, he was like one walking in a dream. The night was dark. The mountain trail was rough and steep. He stepped carelessly, fell headlong after we had been journeying an hour or more, and cut his arm upon a jagged stone. He made light of the hurt. In the dark I did not realize how bad it was and did not stop to dress it, thinking it best to reach Jotapata as soon as possible. But when daylight came and we were still some distance from the city, I found that he was very weak and faint from the loss of blood, and we made those last few miles with difficulty.

"At Jotapata we found lodging with a friend of mine. A leach was summoned and Zatthu had the best of care. But in spite of it he grew steadily worse. A high fever set in and seemed to run like fire all through his veins and to poison his whole system. 'It isn't the wound, it's his crushed and broken spirit,' the leach has said more than once as he looked at him sadly. And that I am sure is true. The people have not been willing to follow him. He feels that he has failed. So he wants to die. For the last two days he had been delirious, and this morning, as I said at first, the end was plainly near. The leach said he had only a few hours to live. And so I came to tell you and your father and mother who were so kind to him. I really had to come, for . . . for . . . I don't quite know how to say it, and yet I must — in his delirium he says one word over and over again, and that is your name."

Had Shobek looked at Thisoa as he said this, he would have seen the color come into her face which had been like marble. But he only heard her say, instantly and very quietly,

"Yes, Shobek, you did right to come. I wish you had come before. But it is not too late. Zatthu must live. There is one who can save him from death even now. Do you not know who that is?"

"Do you mean Jesus of Nazareth?" said Shobek, looking at Thisoa inquiringly.

"Yes. He, and only he, can do it."

"But . . . I ought not perhaps to discourage you," said Shobek hesitatingly, "but it may be too late. I wish indeed I had come before. Zatthu may not be living even now."

"I feel that he is. Even if he is not, I still believe that Jesus of Nazareth can restore him. I have known him to give life to one who had ceased to breathe."

"How strange if he brings Zatthu back to life and health," said Shobek thoughtfully. "For it is this same Jesus who has brought him so low. Everywhere did he find that this carpenter's son had filled the minds of the people. They would not warm to his words because Jesus had healed their diseases and won their hearts. His pride will be wounded beyond cure if he owes his very life to this man who has been the ruin of his hope."

"Not beyond cure, Shobek. But what he will feel we cannot think of now. We must act and act without another moment's delay. My father and mother are away, as Nikon I know has told you. I have to turn to you for help in this great need. And for Zatthu's sake I know you will do every thing you can and do it gladly. Go and learn at once where Jesus is. Then come back here and take me to him. I must seek him wherever he is. But, oh, I hope he's not far away. Yet, stay! You too are hunted by Rome. You might be recognized and seized. That would be terrible! You will have to remain here in concealment and let Nikon do all that must be done."

"No, I cannot let any one but myself be the means of saving Zatthu. I will go this moment and find out where Jesus is and then I will take you to him. Jehovah will be my keeper. Have no fear. I have none."

Before Thisoa could answer, Shobek had turned and walked away from her and in a moment he was out of the house.

Strengthened by his trust Thisoa immediately made her preparations for an expedition the extent of which she could not even conjecture. Jesus, she knew, went in many directions from Capernaum. He traversed all Galilee. He went south as far as Jerusalem. He sometimes crossed Gennesaret and tarried in the country beyond. Wherever he was, he must be sought and found.

First of all she summoned Nikon and said to him,

"Nicon, I am shortly to leave the house and with the help of Shobek find Jesus of Nazareth. Shobek will be a strong protector; but it is possible that the Romans may lay hold of him; so it is best that you should go too. Make no objections, even in your mind. I am doing this to save the life of Zatthu. My father would wish it to be done, for he made a guest-friend of this brave Hebrew who has been brought near to death through trying to free his country from the Romans. I do not know where Jesus is. It may require a journey of a day or more to reach him. But Shobek will soon bring me word and then we must start at once. Be sure then and have everything in readiness when the moment comes — horses and whatever else may be needed."

The command was an extraordinary one, but there was no question in Nikon's mind as to whether it should be executed. More than once he had seen this imperious girl rule the entire household, as she did when she baffled Marcus' search for this same Zatthu whose life seemed now to be at stake. So without any resistance or hesitation he replied,

"It shall be done," and forthwith he set about his task.

Thisoa then sought the woman, Keturah by name, who was her own personal attendant and gave her corresponding instructions. The two made the necessary preparations, and were still busy with them when, ere a full half-hour had elapsed, Shobek appeared again.

"Jesus is on the other side of the lake," was the word he brought. "Many of the fishers have already come in. We

can easily find one of them to take us across. Let us go down to the shore at once."

It was joyous news to Thisoa that the great healer was no farther distant. Without any delay she started for the lake-side with Shobek, Nikon and Keturah.

II

The Lake of Gennesaret, or Sea of Galilee, is a deep broad basin of the river Jordan which courses through it from north to south. Its whole expanse is not greater than that of a large modern city, its extreme length being only thirteen miles. Picturesque hills engirdle it, but their slopes have lost their fertility. On its shores are only a few thinly populated towns today.

A far different scene it presented in the days when the Saviour of men walked upon its waters and quieted its angry waves. Then thriving villages that in some cases attained the dignity of cities were scattered along its margin; and their teeming populations found an easy subsistence from the soil. The lake also yielded fish so abundantly that then, as is the case now indeed, it gave men steady occupation day by day.

But the eastern shore, for some point on which Thisoa was to set sail from Capernaum, was less cultivated, less thickly inhabited, and less used as a fishermen's haven than was that on the western side. Only two villages of any note, Gergesa and Gamala, looked across the lake to the better known communities upon its eastern edge. And just because this region was less frequented, Jesus now and then resorted there to escape the multitudes that thronged about him. So unembellished are the Gospel narratives, so naked in their statements of bare facts, that only by careful reading do we see what a ferment he created throughout Galilee. The people would not let him alone. They hung upon his words. They watched his comings and his goings. They lay in wait for him everywhere; when they found him, they were not willing to lose him out of their sight. So to get relief from this wearing devotion, which had its roots at once in curiosity and in reverence, he was forced sometimes to seek such solitude as

might be found. And yet when he crossed to the eastern shore of the lake they sometimes followed him there.

Had they done so now? Before they went down to the water's edge Thisoa and her little company looked forth to see if they could descry any unusual gathering of boats upon the eastern shore. For its outline could be clearly discerned across the expanse of the lake. Gergesa was but a few miles away. A flotilla of crafts, moored in front of it or at any point near by, could easily have been made out. But no such assemblage was to be seen. They must make for some point and inquire. A fisherman ready to embark with them was easily found. To Gergesa, as the nearest of the two villages on the farther side, they directed their course.

The sun was two hours high when they started. Using oar and sail they made good headway and had landed in front of the town while the red disk, soon to disappear, was still above the western hills. In the village there was quiet. If Jesus was in the neighborhood, his movements had not this time been noted by the crowds.

And this proved to be the case. By good chance Shobek had in Capernaum come across one who knew what the many had not found out. He had been correctly informed. Jesus was on the eastern shore and he was not far from Gergesa. By inquiry it was learned that Jesus and his small company of faithful followers were on the hillside above the town. He had spoken to the people and sent them away. Then with his disciples he had sought retirement.

Up the hillside in quest of him they went eagerly, Shobek leading the way. With as rapid and untiring a step went Thisoa. The fervor of her spirit sustained her; unlike most girls of the orient, she had lived much in the open. Exercise was a pleasure to her and she did not easily tire. So fast indeed did she and Shobek climb that Nikon and Keturah could not keep up with them and lagged a little behind, the

elderly servant having to adapt his pace to that of the maid who had not her mistress' vigorous and elastic step.

The hill they were ascending was some five hundred feet high and was a spur of the range that skirts the eastern shore of Gennesaret. When they had mounted half way they came suddenly upon a group of men who were sitting and standing on a shelving piece of ground that had hid them from view. Twelve of them there were altogether, some talking quietly and some looking out on the lake and the hills beyond. Most of them showed little surprise or interest at the sudden appearance of Shobek and Thisoa among them. Was not all the world going after Jesus of Nazareth? That he should be sought even in this out-of-the-way spot was nothing strange. Yet one of them came forward to accost them, prompted as he soon made plain by a desire to protect his master even more than by love of service.

"What is your wish?" he asked, as he looked at them with passing interest and then glanced at Nikon and Keturah who now joined them.

Shobek started to answer the inquiry, but Thisoa's ardor was too great to allow any one to speak for her.

"We have come to see Jesus. Is he not here?" she said.

"He is not far away," was the answer that seemed to be grudgingly given.

"Pray show me to him at once, then."

"No, I could not do that."

"Oh, but you must. I have come all the way from Capernaum to find him."

"But he sought this side of the lake because all the people in Galilee are seeking him. He is worn and tired from seeing so many. You must not trouble him."

This was said with a frown, and the strong harsh features of the speaker seemed to grow harsher as he spoke. He was a rough man, plainly clad as were all the members of the group. Yet the face showed a rugged sincerity, and in the

attitude and the whole bearing there bespoke a native force that could be kindled into great achievement. Still undaunted and believing that every follower of the wondrous healer must have a gentle heart, Thisoa replied,

"But he is so kind that I thought he was never troubled by those who were in distress and I have come to ask him to heal a dying man."

"You are quite right," said another of the group who had also come forward and had been listening to all that was said. "Our master is never troubled by those who ask for healing. Peter, I must show this woman where Jesus can be seen."

"But he strictly charged us not to seek him, but to wait here till he joined us, however long that might be. Sometimes," he added, turning to Thisoa as if to excuse his own resistance to her entreaty, "he spends all night upon the hills, where no one but the God of Abraham, of Isaac and of Jacob can be his witness."

"Nor shall we go near him or disturb him," said Peter's companion. "But I will go a few steps with this woman and show her how she can herself approach him. Have no fear," he said to her. "He will be gracious unto you."

Peter shrugged his shoulders and said with a manifest tinge of jealousy,

"You always claim to understand him better than the rest of us, John."

But he offered no further objections, and with this kindly follower of Jesus who had shown such a ready sympathy Thisoa went further up the hillside. Her whole heart set on finding the great healer and telling him her sore need, she yet could not help looking with wonder on the man who walked at her side. She had never seen a face like his. Its gentleness spoke directly to the heart. The eye was tender and compassionate. The voice was soft and mild. Yet here she felt was a great strength. It was the strength of a nature that loved good and would cleave to it through suffering and

trial. How easily had the sturdy Peter been overruled by this man's gentle insistence! Was it men like him who were to bring in a new day for the Hebrew nation under the lead of the healer from Nazareth?

The two did not ascend directly upward but followed a path that wound across the hillside. Not more than a few hundred steps had they taken when Thisoa's guide stopped her and directed her gaze upward. As she looked where he pointed her eyes rested on the crest of the hill, and she saw there the figure of a man outlined against the sky. Looking rather than speaking her gratitude, she hastened to complete her climb, while the man who had befriended her turned and went in the direction of his comrades.

So rapidly did Thisoa climb that she reached the hill crest breathless. She paused therefore for a moment to gain power of speech. Not yet was her presence known. So steep was the ascent in the front that faced Gennesaret that she had made her approach from the side. The man she had sought with such perfect faith was half turned from her. He was looking across Gennesaret and the sun was sending its last rays full upon his face. Indeed, the whole figure was flooded with the crimson light as with a glory. Thisoa was filled with awe as she beheld. Who was this man who stood gazing with rapt vision into the western sky? Had he been raised up by the Hebrews' God to purge the whole earth of evil? Was that God whom they so reverently worshipped in very truth the creator of the earth and all its children? And was this man now holding communion with Him and peering into that mysterious world from which he had called little Naomi back to life?

As Thisoa gazed a feeling of shrinking and dread came over her. This presence was too holy and sacred to be disturbed. Jesus had wished to be alone. He was hearing messages from heaven; it was not for her to interrupt them with her human voice. But while she stood awed and silent Jesus

grew aware that she was near and turned toward her. His face was in full view and it shone. It shone with a light that was not of earth. As she beheld it she was seized with dismay. How would he rebuke her for thus intruding upon a solitude which no human eyes should have seen!

He came towards her and the transfiguring light faded from his countenance, but it was not succeeded by a frown. The eyes that met hers expressed such a depth of tenderness that a flood of emotion rushed over her spirit. She fell at the feet of Jesus and sobbed convulsively. Immediately a hand was placed gently upon her head and a wonderful calm stole over her whole frame. She was able to speak, but it was only a few brief words that she said. She did not need to tell her story. She did not need to name any names. Jesus knew all things. He understood. Still kneeling she raised her arms imploringly, looked up and cried,

“Oh, save him! He is nigh to death.”

And now the eyes that had gazed into hers looked far away. Their expression was deeply serious, almost troubled. The figure that had stood so calmly majestic before her now seemed to breathe forth effort and will. Thisoa watched breathlessly. Had she asked too much? Was Zatthu no longer living? Or was he so far away that the healing current could not flow into him as it had flowed into Marcus' servant Hacho? But she was not long in suspense. Quickly that wonderful look of a more than human compassion returned to the face of Jesus. With his hand he signed to her that she was to arise and said,

“He is healed.”

Thisoa said nothing. Words seemed meaningless. And they were not needed. Not gratitude merely, but joy, deep transporting joy showed in her face. With an answering expression which showed that he understood, Jesus turned from her and went again to the place whence he had gazed across the lake to the Galilean hills. For a moment Thisoa

watched him and then made her way slowly down the slope. Eager as she was to impart the joyful news, she could not hurry from a spot where she had seen what would always speak to the deep places of her spirit.

Before she found her companions and the group of followers, she met the kindly guide who had been waiting for her.

“Was he not gracious to you?” he inquired.

“He was more than gracious; he was tender and kind beyond words. But who is he? What is he? I am filled with wonder and awe. How can any man be what he is?”

John did not answer her at once. Thoughtfully he walked a few paces at her side and then said,

“I cannot tell you. I am filled with wonder too. We must wait and see. Greater things may be done than have ever yet been done, for there is one among us who is greater than any who have been.”

The glad tidings were quickly made known and the four then hastened to the lake shore. The voyage home was quickly and comfortably made as the wind was favoring. It was quite early in the evening when they reached Thisoa’s home. Here Shobek bade them goodbye and set out for Jotapata, resisting the most urgent entreaties that he spend the night under the roof of Aristarchus and make his journey by daylight.

“I cannot wait,” he said. “I must go at once to Zatthu and tell him why it is that he has risen from his bed well and strong; for so I am sure I shall find him.”

“Yes, I too am sure that you will find him so,” said Thisoa. “And yet, we should all be so glad to be made certain.”

“You shall be made certain. I promise you that,” answered Shobek; and then at a brisk pace he started on his way.

III

Three days later Zatthu himself appeared at the house of Aristarchus. He came in the evening and was warmly greeted by the kind hearted Greek merchant who had returned from Tiberias with Xenodice.

"Welcome, welcome, my friend! Thrice welcome!" cried Aristarchus. "Your visits are so infrequent that it is a real joy to see you. And," he could not forbear adding in a spirit of mischief, "you bring so much life and stir into the house that you are sure to be a very entertaining guest."

It was only the faintest smile that Zatthu gave in answer to this pleasantry. His manner was very subdued. Well and vigorous though he plainly was, he seemed crushed and broken in spirit.

"I trust," he replied, "that the kind of life and stir I brought with me before will not follow me this time. I should not have showed myself here if I had thought I could cause you further annoyance and anxiety. But I came as you see in the dark. I shall go away as soon as I have told your daughter that I know how much I owe to her. I beg leave to tell her that. I hardly wish to thank her. It would have been better perhaps to let me die."

"My good friend," said the Greek placing his hand kindly on his visitor's shoulder, "you make me think of a boy comrade of mine who was nearly drowned. We got him out of the water just in time. Then we rolled him and pounded him and pinched him till he opened his eyes. But he felt so weak and sick that instead of thanking us, he only gasped out with a weak faint voice: 'Why didn't you let me drown?' Here are you — a man that has escaped from prison, slipped out of the hands of the Romans at midnight from this very house, foiled them through long months while they chased you all over the hills of Galilee, been sore wounded and sick almost to

death, and yet restored to perfect health and strength — for I see you are that — and now you say you ought to have died! A man that has been through what you have has only just begun to live. You have great things to do. Go on and do them."

"No," said Zatthu, shaking his head sadly. "I have nothing to do. That is what troubles me. It is that that I want to make plain to you and your wife and daughter who have been such good friends to me."

"And you shall do so, and right away. I will tell them you are here. They will be anxious to hear your story."

Aristarchus was gone but a moment. Returning he said,

"You shall unburden your mind in the room where you thrilled us by the wonderful account of your escape from the prison at Cæsarea. My wife and daughter are eagerly awaiting you there. Come with me."

The greeting of Xenodice and Thisoa was as warm as Zatthu could have wished; but what deep delight it gave Thisoa to see him again he did not know. The very intensity of her feelings made her manner restrained, cordial and hearty though her words of welcome were. And little indeed was said by way of ceremony. Hardly was Zatthu seated when Aristarchus bade him satisfy their curiosity and their deep friendly interest by letting them know just what happened after Shobek had come to the house to announce that he was near his end.

"Shobek was right," Zatthu began at once. "The morning he left me I was unconscious. I had been unconscious most of the time for some three days. The spark of life was nearly extinguished in me. The spirit that would keep it alive was wholly gone. I had failed, utterly failed in my cherished purpose. Life had nothing left for me and I did not want to live. Late in the afternoon I came to myself and I knew it was the last opening of my eyes upon the world before they were closed to it forever. I was glad to leave it, but I was

glad too that I could look out on it once more and bid it good-bye. Through the window in my room I could gaze upon the hills lying to the west of the city and see the sunlight on them. The sun was shining very brightly. I was pleased that it was so. I said to myself that Jehovah was good to let me pass from the world while it wore a smile.

"Peacefully I lay there for a while, but growing weaker all the time. At last I closed my eyes, or rather they closed of themselves, and I knew that the end was very near. Yet I had not quite lost consciousness and when the faithful woman who had tended me all through my illness and who could not believe I was dying leaned over me with tender solicitude and asked if there was nothing she could do for me, I was able to murmur,

"'Nothing. Goodbye.'

"And just at that moment I felt a thrill run through my frame. It was as if the dying spark of life had been suddenly fanned into a glow and was sending a surge of fire into every part of me. So mighty was this rush of life and strength that my worn exhausted body could not passively receive it. It seemed to resist the force that came flooding in and I suffered much in this strange conflict between death and life. But life conquered. Its tide could not be stayed. Even before I could take in what was happening I found myself a new man. In amazement I sat up in bed. I felt of myself and moved my limbs. All my weakness was gone and I stood on my feet and walked about the room.

"With more than astonishment, with terror even, my faithful Deborah had watched this strange and seemingly impossible activity of mine. How could a man who had been almost too weak to say a last word of farewell before death seized him suddenly rise from his bed and walk? She thought it must be my spirit that she was looking upon and she shrank away from me, opening her mouth to speak and yet too dumbfounded to utter a word.

“‘It is really myself, Deborah,’ I said to reassure her, for I could see what was in her mind. ‘It is myself and I am well.’

“And I was. From the very edge of the sepulchre I had passed to perfect strength and health. Even the angry wound which through my very weakness had refused to heal had closed. So in wonder I sat down to think. What did it all mean? Suddenly it flashed into my mind that somehow Shobek had brought about this wondrous change. Could he have gone to the carpenter’s son and begged him to cure me? If so, could this strange healer have restored me to strength when he was far away?

“In great unrest, in deep anguish of spirit, I awaited Shobek’s return, sleeping but little through the night. At dawn he appeared and I listened, bewildered, humiliated and enthralled, to the story he had to tell. It only confirmed what I had suspected, what I may say I feared.

“For I do not deceive myself. It was no turn in the course of my sickness that suddenly snatched me from death. When that happens there is an almost imperceptible change at first and very, very slowly the one who lies hardly breathing gains strength and perfect health. No, it was no such happening in my case. Jesus of Nazareth sent a tide of life into my body just as the breath was leaving it. But it was to you,” he continued turning now to Thisoa, “that I owe the intercession that saved me, not to Shobek. It was you who had faith that the carpenter’s son could cure me. It was you who sought him, with Shobek’s help, and found him on the mountain top. It was most generously done. What staunch true friends have I, an alien, found in this hospitable house! It humbles me to think how much you have all done for me and how utterly powerless I am to show my gratitude.”

“Show it,” said Aristarchus, “by being glad that you are alive. That is all we wish.”

“And why not rejoice,” added Thisoa, “that Jesus of Nazareth cured you? You said, you feared it might prove

that he had restored you to health and life. Why should you have felt so?"

"Because that is the very thing," replied Zatthu with manifest bitterness, "that completes my humiliation. My hopes are a wreck, an utter shapeless ruin. The beliefs I had cherished are all shattered. I thought Jehovah had called me to free my nation. It was the voice of my own foolish pride. I thought the ancient promises to my people were now to be fulfilled. I was altogether wrong. I was sure the Hebrews would rally round me when I fired them to throw off the yoke of Rome. They flattered and encouraged me, but they would not heed my call. No, they were deaf to me because they had given their hearts to this son of a carpenter who has called about him the common and the unclean. Everywhere I went I found that the minds of those who listened to me had been won by this man Jesus. He has been my undoing — he whom I considered an impostor and whose healing art I denounced as unholy and given him not by Jehovah but Beelzebub. And now I owe my life to this very man. Oh, it is bitter, bitter, bitter! To think of it is torture to my soul."

Zatthu was too much overcome to continue, and his three hearers all felt that his grief was too deep to be reached by any ordinary words of consolation. But his mood was one that really demanded the relief of expression, and while they were wondering how they could bring comfort to such a poignant distress, he rallied and went on:

"You," he said, turning to Aristarchus, "wonder why I am not glad to live, and tell me I have yet great things to do. What things? Do you forget that I am an outlaw, that Rome has set a price on my head? Where can I go and what can I do? I came here under cover of the darkness. While it is yet dark I must steal away. It is not so much that I fear to be taken. It is the trouble I might bring to this generous house that makes me fearful. And I must indeed go now. There is nothing more to say — nothing but, Farewell. I say it with a

very full heart. Your kindness I can never forget. I shall think of it as I go from place to place ever fleeing the vengeance of Rome. If Rome takes me, as sooner or later she surely will, I shall think of it when I suffer a painful death. You have been more generous to me even than my own people. I shall think of you even before them. But you will never see me again. However much my heart may turn to you, I shall never seek your threshold. So, Goodbye."

"Nay, nay," said Aristarchus, refusing the hand extended in farewell but placing his arm affectionately around the young Hebrew, "that must not be. You must not even think of going away from us so. Here is the place, the only place for you, under this roof. You will be absolutely safe here. No one saw you come. My servants would no more think of betraying you than I should myself. And even if you should be discovered, which I hold to be impossible, no harm would come to me. Dismiss that thought from your mind. Did Marcus mark me out for vengeance because I sheltered you before? No, he was too large-minded and generous. He knew you were my guest-friend and he respected the tie. It is a sacred one. You have had indeed a wearing, a crushing, a bewildering experience. You need to sit down and think about it all till your mind sees its way clearly through the maze you are in and you are at peace with yourself. Here is the place for you to rest and think. My home is yours. Make it so, at least till these clouds have cleared. I can myself do much, I am confident, to make them clear. I will use all my influence with Marcus and through him get Rome to pardon you."

"Your kindness is as great as one man ever showed to another," said Zatthu, gently but firmly releasing himself from the Greek's friendly embrace, "but I ought not to accept it. I cannot accept it. Strangely was I led to this house to find here such friendliness that I believed it was all ordered by Jehovah, and so I took what you gave. But I must take

no more. I am a Hebrew. I am hunted by Rome because I tried to free my people from her hated and unjust dominion. Back to my own people I must go. In the hills of my own country I must find refuge. They have sheltered many a hero and prophet of my nation. It is among them that I must myself find shelter, not in this generous but alien house. I might take ship for some foreign shore, but wherever I went the hand of Rome would reach out after me. So here in my own land I shall abide and wait for the dayspring to come. For come it must, though how I cannot now discern. Perhaps it will be a day of deliverance. Jehovah has not forsaken his chosen people. And so, Goodbye. My heart aches when I say it, but it must be said."

They saw that his will was fixed and they did not oppose it further. Silently he pressed the hand of each and turned resolutely away. Aristarchus accompanied him to the door and watched him as he disappeared in the darkness. He did not once look back, but how much it had cost him to turn from the roof that sheltered Thisoa, no one of the three who had witnessed his stern resolution dreamed. For Thisoa herself now set down his frequent utterance of her name in delirium as the mere wandering fancy of a fevered mind.

IV

In spite of Zatthu's seeming aversion to receiving further help from aliens, Aristarchus was determined to secure for him a pardon from Rome if possible. This fixed purpose he made known to Xenodice and Thisoa; but a matter of trade called him the following day into Samaria before he could set about this friendly act.

But his spirited daughter chafed at the delay. Zatthu might be taken and summarily dealt with while those who might save him stood still and did nothing. She determined therefore to go to Marcus and make intercession herself.

She found the centurion at his house alone, Naarah being at the bedside of a friend who needed her good offices.

"Marcus," she began with a half-playful approach to the grave object of her visit, "what reward would you give me if I told you where you could find the ever-elusive Zatthu?"

"Which means," replied Marcus, "that he has been at your father's house, but has gone away already."

"There is no pleasure in trying to puzzle you," she rejoined. "You see through any little mental play too quickly. Yes, you are right, as you usually are. Zatthu came to see us last night, but now he is far away in the hills again."

"And is he really well and strong?" inquired Marcus with grave interest; for he had already heard how Thisoa, aided by Shobek, had found Jesus and received from him the assurance that the Hebrew was restored to health.

"Yes, he is well. He told us how his illness suddenly left him. It was a wonderful story."

"Is there no limit to the compassion, the tenderness and the mercy of this man of Nazareth?" queried Marcus, speaking as much to himself as to Thisoa. "Is there no limit to his power? Zatthu was many miles away from him, and yet he raised him in an instant from mortal sickness to life and

strength, even as he raised my Hacho. Who is this man? What is he that he can do these things?"

"The very question I asked one of his followers who was kind to me and showed me where I could find Jesus."

"And what was his answer?"

"He said he could not answer, but he felt that Jesus was greater than any one that has been on earth before and would do greater things than have ever yet been done."

"I believe he will. I believe he will," said Marcus very solemnly. "And what a day will dawn then — such a day perhaps as this world has never seen."

The thought was too great for mere idle speculation. Both sat in silence a moment and then Thisoa said,

"Marcus, you speak as if the compassion and mercy of Jesus called for our regard and reverence. Should we not imitate him then? Should we not pardon our enemies? Should not Rome pardon hers?"

"By hers you mean Zatthu, no doubt."

"Yes, I mean Zatthu."

"The teachings of Jesus certainly should be followed. Yet one man can do what a state cannot. It is not safe for a state to pardon its enemies."

"Zatthu will do Rome no harm. He is no longer Rome's enemy."

"So you told Naarah after Shobek sought you. From her I heard the story. Zatthu, so Shobek reported, was broken and dying. He left the robbers' lair, where he was sheltered and about to be betrayed, with a feeling that he had utterly failed. But how is it now that he is strong and well again?"

"In body he is strong and well; but his hope is gone. He is no longer at strife with Rome. She has naught to fear from him."

"I am ready to believe what you say. But I cannot pardon him, and Rome does not easily forgive her enemies."

"Pilate could pardon him."

“And I could make him do so?”

“Yes.”

“I fear not. I could not so influence him.”

“Is there no one that could?”

Marcus’ reply did not come immediately. Presently he said, looking fixedly at Thisoa,

“Yes. You could.”

“I, Marcus? What do you mean?”

“I mean that Pilate is . . . very human. But,” he added, for he saw that Thisoa’s cheeks were growing crimson, “I neither said nor thought anything that need disturb you, Thisoa. You asked me a searching question; I gave you the only possible answer. If you should go to Cæsarea under my protection, you would have nothing to fear. I am the son of the Prefect of Rome and to my friend, Pilate would not dare to show any lack of respect. He would even pardon Zatthu, I am fully persuaded, if he heard you plead his cause. But even though I tell you this out of pity for that poor misguided Hebrew, whom I would gladly save, I know it could not be.”

“No, Marcus,” said Thisoa in a very low, sad voice, “it could not be. And you understand, do you not? You know why it could not be?”

“Yes, Thisoa. I understand. I know why you could go to Jesus of Nazareth and let him see all that was in your heart, but not to Pontius Pilate.”

“But if Pilate so respects you because you are your father’s son, why would he not heed you if you pleaded Zatthu’s cause?”

“To some extent he would. I think I could save Zatthu from crucifixion in case he should be taken; but I fear that is the best that I could do.”

“You have said you pity Zatthu and would be glad to save him. Will you not do what you can for him?”

“Yes, I will do all I can.”

"Then you will not try to capture him?"

"No; neither him nor Shobek. Kelita, I know, has met his end, and for that I am glad. He was an assassin and he deserved his fate. But if Zatthu is now harmless, Shobek is also. That big fellow has a kindly nature. I wish all our Roman soldiers were as free from cruelty and meanness as he is."

"How well you understand men, Marcus!"

"I am afraid I understand Pilate only too well. It is because I do that I give you no great encouragement."

"Is he a bad man?"

"He is not a virtuous man like your father, or like Zatthu. But alas! he is no worse than many a man Rome has placed in authority."

"And will things get no better, Marcus? Will not Jesus make them better?"

"Can any one man make them better? I believe Jesus could if it were really possible. But the world is large and I see evil in it everywhere."

"Yes, but ever since I saw Jesus on the mountain, I have felt as if he might drive all the evil in the world away."

"Let us hope that he can, Thisoa. Let us hope that he can, though it is much to hope."

V

The next day Marcus made the journey to Cæsarea. Proceeding in an altogether leisurely manner and resting when the sun was highest he reached the city late in the afternoon of the second day. Pilate received him cordially and, as was his custom when Marcus came to see him, gave him lodging in his own house.

The two soon came into conference in a room which Pilate often used for semi-official purposes, but Marcus was slow in letting the real object of his journey be known. He reported upon the state of Galilee as he observed it; told how interested the people were in Jesus of Nazareth whose exhortations to pure and upright living were no menace to Rome; and then went on to say that Zatthu, so long and vainly sought, had wholly ceased to rouse his countrymen to rebellion because their devotion to Jesus made them deaf to his counsels.

"In short," Marcus said in conclusion, "Zatthu has failed. He knows he has failed. He is chagrined, even broken, and he has utterly abandoned his seditious purpose. It is not worth while to hunt him any more."

"You really do not mean that he ought to roam at large?"

"Why not? He has become utterly harmless."

"But he must pay the penalty of his crimes. He has killed a number of Roman soldiers. His own life must be the forfeit."

"It will only embitter this race, that already hates Rome fiercely, to put him to death. It would be a shrewd act of policy to pardon him and show that Rome is at once magnanimous and serenely confident of her own strength—like a lion that is disdainful of the weaker creatures of the wilds."

"Do you really think that?"

"Yes, it is my sober judgment."

"I cannot see it so. The crimes of this outlaw must not go

unpunished. That would look like weakness. Moreover, what assurance have I that a man so rebellious at heart will for all time cease to be a breeder of strife? Discouraged for the moment, he may soon take heart and again pour forth his incendiary speech. A vehement and captivating pleader he is said to be; a very master of seditious phrase."

"I can vouch for him. I know that he has lost all heart and abandoned once and for all the cause he had held sacred."

"You talk as if you had had personal conference with him, and yet that could hardly be — you, a centurion of Rome."

"Assuredly not. But friends of mine have seen him very lately. It is from them that I have learned this."

"Could they not have delivered him into your hands? Have they not been false to Rome?"

"You must remember that I am married to a Hebrew woman and that I have friends who would never act against Rome, but who yet could not be expected to betray a Hebrew whom they sympathized with and admired. It is because I have the confidence of many who are not at heart true friends to Rome that I exert a quieting influence and make Rome's authority respected."

"I grant all that. Your position must bring difficulties. I would not make them greater. But I cannot think as you do that this man, whose hands are red with Roman blood, should go free and boast that he has done to death our own legionaries and yet paid no penalty for his crime. For a crime it is to do violence to those who uphold the Roman power. It is a crime that Rome has always visited with the most summary justice. So far am I from thinking Zattu should be pardoned that I hold the cross to be his due. If he is taken . . ."

But just here Pilate was interrupted by a knock at the door. In response to his bidding a soldier entered and reported that a decurion had just arrived from Galilee with important news.

"Is he one of those who were sent out to find that notorious rebel Zatthu and his fellow outlaws?"

"Yes, he is one of those."

"Show him here at once."

Pilate's face wore an eager expression while he awaited the decurion's coming. Plainly he hoped to hear that the enemy who had so long baffled him was captured or killed; and plainly too this same enemy's continued immunity was a matter of chagrin with him. He was angry very much as a man is angry with some small insect which at once vexes and eludes him.

Very shortly the soldier entered again with the decurion, and with the manifested consent of Pilate remained to hear his story. The decurion was begrimed and travel-stained. Apparently he had come in all haste from Galilee and, owing to the importance of his message, had not been allowed to remove the signs of his speedy journeying before appearing in person before the governor of Palestine.

"You were sent to capture Zatthu and his two followers?" said Pilate as soon as the man had saluted.

"Yes."

"What have you to report?"

"Zatthu has fallen into our hands."

Glancing at Marcus with a smile of triumph, Pilate then inquired,

"And the other two?"

"One of them also, the tall one who is such a stout fighter. The hunchback has not been seen of late and Zatthu admits that he is dead."

"The world is well rid of him. He was a cowardly murderer. But tell your tale. When did you lay hold of these two rebels, and where?"

"It was yesterday, late in the day, in the hills near Jotapata."

"And you had a fierce encounter when you captured them,

no doubt. Did that long-legged one — I never can remember these Hebrew names — lay low any more of my legionaries? He shall pay a heavy price for it if he did."

"We did have a fierce encounter, but not with the two Hebrews. It was with a band of robbers that we had to fight and they would have killed every man of us if Zatthu and his friend had not come to our rescue."

An expression both frowning and puzzled came over Pilate's face and he avoided the eye of Marcus which he knew was directed toward him. In a more subdued manner than he had showed before, he said,

"You astonish me. I can hardly believe what you say. But go on and tell your story to the end."

"Nine men were scouring Galilee under my command to find these Hebrew outlaws. To make the search more thorough I sent five of them northward to hunt by themselves. Word came to me soon after this that Zatthu had been seen in Jotapata. I was then near Sippchoris, and toward Jotapata I directed my course with the four men I still had with me. While we were following a woodland trail a mile or two from the city, we heard sounds of an altercation on the road below. Rushing down in the direction of the noise, we came upon three robbers who were despoiling two unarmed travelers in spite of their loud protestations. Managing to surround the knaves before they took in what was happening, we commanded them to surrender. Instead of doing so one of them gave a shrill whistle, thrice repeated; and before I could have counted fifty nearly a dozen more of the cut-throats came running to the rescue of their comrades. So now we were surrounded and a lively fight began. The robbers were all armed, most of them with swords, one or two of them with heavy clubs. Getting at us in the rear they soon had two of us disabled and stretched on the ground. Another was badly hurt. It was going hard with us. These men hate Rome, for it crucifies them when they are caught. They were

determined to kill us all. As to the two travellers—they gave no help. They had no weapons and there was no fight in them. They were Syrian traders, I found later; and the Syrians are peace lovers with no stomach for bloodshed.

“But just as I had made up my mind there was nothing for us to do but cut down as many of the scoundrels as we could before we met our own fate, two men darted up, shouted to us not to give in, and took a hand in the fray. At the moment I could not see who they were. I only noted that one of them seized a sword from one of my comrades who was down and began to use it vigorously, while the other laid about him with a ponderous club.

“You will find it hard to believe how quickly these two turned our defeat into a victory. But the one who had the sword—that proved to be Zatthu—knew how to use it and instantly gave one of the robbers a bad wound in the side that made him stop fighting. As for the other—he fought like a madman. His club was really a small log that he had by good chance picked up and he swung it so furiously that almost in the twinkling of an eye he had three robbers down on the ground. This seemed to take the heart out of them all. They acted as if they were scared and took to their heels, while I stood there dazed and wondering.

“It was Shobek, of course, who had put such terror into the ruffians. I did not wonder as I looked him over and saw the monstrous club he had used. Two of the men he had laid low were groaning but had much life in them, and we knew their comrades would come and look after them. Two others were lying dead. Our Roman broadswords had dealt them the fatal thrust. Another was near his end. Shobek’s club had given him a death blow. Zatthu and Shobek were bending over him.

“‘Mizpereth,’ I heard Shobek say to him, ‘as I had to kill some one, I am glad it was you. ’Twas a foul deed you tried to do to a man who was kind to you and trusted you.’

“‘Yet I am only sorry to see you lying here,’ said Zatthu. ‘Don’t you want to say you are sorry you planned to betray me before you go out of the world?’ But Mizpereth, as they called him, only gasped out,

“‘I wish I had given you up to the Romans and got the gold for it,’ and then he died.

“Perhaps I have been making my story longer than I ought. It was how we captured Zatthu that you wanted to know. But I have had to tell all that happened first, for we didn’t capture him at all. You see I wasn’t able to lay hands on him or fight to kill him and Shobek. There I was, unhurt myself, but three of my four comrades were down and the fourth had a bad cut in the sword arm and could not fight. Shobek could have struck him down in an instant. Still, there was only one thing to do. I knew these must be the two I had been sent out to seize. So I said,

“‘Are not you Zatthu and Shobek, the two Hebrews Rome has long been seeking?’

“‘Yes,’ said the leader. ‘We are Zatthu and Shobek.’

“‘Then surrender to me. I have been sent to capture you, and you must go with me to Cæsarea.’

“To my astonishment Zatthu answered,

“‘I am ready to go with you. Lead me wherever you will.’

“The tall one seemed surprised, but he said without a moment’s hesitation,

“‘And I go wherever my leader goes.’

“‘Think twice,’ said Zatthu quickly. ‘I only spoke for myself. They could not take you. You would best save yourself.’

“‘No,’ was the answer. ‘I have followed you too long to leave you now. I shall share your fate whatever that may be.’

“So I took them in charge and brought them here as soon as I could. Just how I had the wounded men looked after, I have reported to the centurion Decimus. So perhaps I had

better end my story here, unless there are more things you would like to know."

"Only one more," said Pilate. "Zatthu and Shobek have been placed in prison, I suppose."

"Yes, and in chains."

"That is as it should be. You have done well. Go now, eat and rest."

The decurion and the soldier who had brought him in left the room. Pilate and Marcus sat a while in silence. Pilate wanted the centurion to speak first, but Marcus wished to hear the Procurator's comments before he offered any of his own. Finally Pilate said in a tone of irony,

"I suppose you feel more strongly than ever now that Zatthu should be pardoned."

"Yes, and Shobek too."

"Perhaps you would ask the same for the hunchback if he were living."

"Hardly; he was an assassin."

"Do you know how he came to his end?"

"Yes, he was killed in a cave by a spy of yours after first giving the fellow his death wound."

"Oho! How well posted you are! Now I understand why I have heard nothing from Pachru for some time. Well, I am glad the hunchback has gone where he can kill no more of my soldiers. He deserved the cross if ever a man did."

Pilate ceased and sat silent for a while. Again Marcus prudently refrained from pressing him with a plea for mercy. Presently Pilate put the question,

"Marcus, do you think the emperor would pardon Zatthu and Shobek?"

"Tiberius," replied Marcus, "has many moods. In his better moods I think he would do so."

"Zatthu is a strange being. I don't know what to make of him. We will hear what he has to say for himself tomorrow."

On the following morning Zatthu and Shobek, with their

fetters still upon them, were brought into the same official room in which Zatthu had been tried and sentenced more than a year before. Now as then he was face to face with Pilate and Marcus both. But in what a different spirit he faced them! He was humbled and weary-hearted, not defiant; and Pilate was now the puzzled questioner rather than the stern accuser. It was without trace of vindictiveness that he said, after noting Zatthu's subdued manner,

"You are not the same man that stood before me many months since. What has changed you?"

"Failure."

"How have you failed?"

"I tried to make my people rise against Rome. They would not heed me."

"Are they then contented with our rule?"

"By no means. They detest it."

"Why?"

"Because it humiliates them and takes away from them all their sense of national greatness."

"Why then would they not heed your call to arms?"

"Because," said Zatthu with a sigh that revealed how his soul had been hurt, "I was not sent by Jehovah to free them as I, in my presumption, thought I was."

Pilate was so impressed with the prisoner's frankness and his deep despondency that he eyed him closely for a moment before he questioned him further. A feeling of pity for one so thoroughly humbled was rising in him. Presently he said,

"So Rome has nothing to fear from your people even though they resent her sway?"

"I would not say that. The spirit of rebellion is strong in them. Sometime I believe Rome will find this out to her cost."

"You puzzle me. If your countrymen are so rebellious, why could you not make them rise?"

"They have turned to another. They will listen to no one but him."

"Who is that?"

"Jesus of Nazareth."

"Why do they regard him with such favor?"

"He heals their diseases."

"How do you know that?"

"Because they told me so. Because he healed mine."

"He healed your own? How was that?"

"I was dying of a wound and of the fever it caused, when all of a sudden I found myself well."

"As not uncommonly happens with those who are sick. How easily we deceive ourselves! But if the people think this Jesus heals them and they are becoming devoted to him, is he not dangerous? Will not he stir up strife against Rome?"

"I think not. He does not use seditious speech and he has offended the men of learning and authority who could lead in such a cause. But I do not understand him. I do not understand him at all. He has been a stumbling block in my path, and yet I owe him my life. I have yet to learn what is the secret of his power and what he is really trying to do for my nation."

"You speak as if your courage were gone. Was that why you surrendered yourself two days ago? The officer who brought you here has told me that he could not have taken you."

"Yes, that was why. I had nothing to live for. I was tired of being hunted. I thought I would end it all."

"That robber whom your comrade killed — what was his name?"

"Mispereth."

"He planned to betray you, I believe."

"Yes, he would have done so if my comrade here and I had not fled from the robbers' lair where we were sheltered for a time."

"And was it because of his treachery that you fought

against the robbers and saved the band of Roman soldiers from being destroyed?"

"Not at all. I saw that the soldiers were trying to protect travellers from being plundered. They were being cut down while doing their plain duty. It was only right to go to their assistance. I cherish no hatred toward the robbers. I was not trying to pay them back."

"Would you show the way to their den?"

"It would be useless. They keep shifting their resort. Without doubt they changed it as soon as Shobek and I escaped from them. Still, I should be loath to aid in tracking them. Their deeds are evil, but they took me in when I was wounded and fleeing for my life."

"I still fail to understand you. You say you were tired of being hunted and you thought you would end it all. Is it not better to be hunted than to be crucified?"

"Perhaps. It is a choice between long wearisome years of privation, suffering and anxiety, and a few hours of agony."

"And you deliberately chose the few hours of agony?"

"That I would hardly say. When I rushed with my friend to defeat the robbers and save your soldiers from death, I had but one thought, to thwart an inhuman deed. When that was accomplished and your soldiers rescued but crippled, I merely acted on the impulse that then came to me."

"But was there not something behind that impulse? Did you think, perhaps," and here Pilate looked very searchingly at the man he was questioning as if he would read his inmost thought, "that because you had rescued Roman soldiers from death you would be pardoned?"

"I was not so presumptuous. Roman justice is too summary and unbending to have allowed me so to think. Yet one thought, one memory rather, did flash upon my mind as I gave myself up to your soldiers."

"What was that?" asked Pilate with a little more eagerness than he had shown before.

"That when I formerly stood here before you and held up my manacled hands, you ordered my fetters to be stricken off."

As Zatthu said this, Marcus wanted much to look at Pilate and see how these words impressed him. He did not however venture to do so, but he caught Zatthu's eye for an instant and showed him sympathy and approval by one of those glances that are so subtly charged with meaning. Had Marcus gazed at Pilate, he would easily have seen a faint gleam of gratification pass over his mobile face. Not at once did he continue his questioning. When he did so, it was in a milder tone than he had used before that he said,

"You say you have nothing to live for. If you were free, should you not soon be lifting voice and hand against Rome once more?"

"Not unless my countrymen should all rise against Rome. For me it is a broken hope."

"And your comrade — what are his feelings?"

"Speak for yourself, Shobek," said Zatthu. "You know you are now your own man absolutely. I have no claim upon you."

"For these many months," said Shobek, "I have had but one thought, one purpose — to follow Zatthu and give my life for him if in that way I could serve him and Israel. But the cause has failed. My heart has turned from it. I cannot think of myself as warring against Rome any more."

"But you have warred against Rome," said Pilate with a touch of asperity, "and to the sorrow of those who stood against you. More than once you have slain Roman soldiers. When you gave yourself up, you knew, of course the fate that awaited you?"

"Yes, I understood."

"Then why did you not fly instead of surrendering?"

"My leader gave himself up. I could not desert him."

"Not though you knew you were to die upon the cross?"

“No. I should have despised myself all my life if I had let him go to his death alone.”

Again Pilate sat silent for awhile. After a time that seemed long to all present, who out of the various feelings of curiosity, sympathy, or direct personal concern were waiting eagerly, he said,

“You are two misguided men. You have committed crimes that Rome punishes with death. Yet you have fought side by side with Rome’s soldiers and saved their lives. Let that deed outweigh your offenses, seeing that you have wholly abandoned your purpose of freeing Judæa from the Roman power. Decimus, take off the prisoners’ fetters. They are free.”

VI

Of those who heard Pilate's merciful mandate Shobek was the most elated. He looked at Zatthu with eyes that fairly shone with joy. Ever since their surrender he had been thinking of the man he had so faithfully followed, not of himself. That this man, so downcast, so long enduring, could now walk in freedom instead of looking forward to a torturing death filled him with delight.

But Marcus rejoiced also. After the two captives had been released from their fetters and had expressed to Pilate their appreciation of his magnanimity, the big-hearted centurion took each of them by the hand and told them how glad he was that the Procurator had seen fit to pronounce a sentence of mercy instead of rigid Roman justice.

Zatthu had so far betrayed no emotion over his unexpected liberty. His manner was still subdued and sober. But he gave an answering pressure when Marcus took him by the hand, and he gazed very earnestly into the centurion's frank strong countenance and said,

"I should like to know you. Will you let me talk with you some time?"

"Gladly. The Procurator wishes me to go with him on a brief tour of inspection now. Inquire for me an hour hence at his house. You shall talk with me then as long as you wish."

The two met in a small audience room in the house of the procurator. To encourage his visitor Marcus said at once,

"What was in your mind was in mine also. It will be a pleasure to get acquainted with your thoughts, your purposes, your desires, if you count me worthy to share them."

"Worthy to share them? What a strange Roman you are! Your countrymen are above all things arrogant and proud. How is it you are so unlike them?"

"My father was not too arrogant and proud to count Eliud Merari as his friend and to revere him."

"He too must be unlike most Romans. Does he also worship our Jehovah?"

"No."

"How came you to do so? Do you care to tell me?"

This was a story Marcus was entirely willing to relate to one of Zatthu's deep religious feeling. So he told how he and Naarah had been brought together, and how, when he was wounded and Naarah sang Hebrew Psalms at his bedside, he heard for the first time in his life a strain that spoke to his soul. He began then to hear from Naarah about the Sacred Writings of the Hebrews and after a time to read them for himself. In them he saw the truth and Naarah's faith became his own because his reason told him it was true.

"I feel as if I could trust your reason," said Zatthu when he ended, "as I can trust that of no other man. By turning from your Roman religion to our own you showed that you are always trying to see what is true. So, strange as it is for me to look to you for light and guidance, I must do so. From the leaders and teachers of my own people I can get no help."

"Not from Eliud Merari?"

"Perhaps from him. I shall go to him to see. But he is very old. He speaks rather as a prophet than as a man who judges from what he sees and hears day by day. And help I sorely need, for since I have failed utterly in my one cherished purpose, I dare not rely on my own judgment. One question, then, one burning question I must put to you: What think you of Jesus of Nazareth?"

Marcus was startled by this searching question. The large dark eyes that gazed with a burning intensity into his own made him feel a strange sense of responsibility. And it was a responsibility which he did not seem able to evade. This man who had had such a shattering experience was looking into his very soul to see if there were aught there to strengthen

him. So Marcus gave a full account of Hacho's cure — Zathu not deeming it wise or best to reveal that he had already heard that wonderful story — and of the sum of his impressions after observing Jesus and noting both his words and his movements month after month.

"Then you, one of the appointed guardians of Rome's authority, see in this man no menace to her power?"

"So far, none."

"Yet Galilee is aflame with devotion to him. The common people throng about him, they hang upon his words, they believe he has been sent by Jehovah to be their deliverer."

"Their deliverer from what?"

"That is the burning question. It is enthusiasm, not reason, that rules them. They believe he will lead them to greatness, but how, they have little idea. Still, there has been but one way for a people to grow great, and that is by the sword."

"Does he ever urge the sword? Can you think of him as heading an army or using the sword?"

"No, I confess that I cannot."

"No more can I. That he is greater than any of your leaders and prophets of the olden days, I cannot help believing. That he has come to do something more wonderful for your nation than has yet been wrought, I feel sure. But what, I cannot say. I am simply waiting to see."

"Something more wonderful for my nation than has yet been wrought — yes, it would seem that with his power to heal and his power to make men follow him that should be so. And yet he is destroying, not building up. Instead of uniting all my countrymen he is sowing dissension among them. The common people go after him like sheep; the scribes and Pharisees turn away from him with scorn."

"Though I worship Jehovah I am not a Hebrew, and in this division I have no part. Yet of one thing I am confident; it is the common people, not the scribes and the Pharisees, who are right."

"To my humiliation I am coming to think so too, though I am of the Pharisees myself, and till Jesus healed me I shared the scorn they feel for him."

"Why not go again to Merari? Perhaps it is just his prophetic vision that will reveal what is to be. We grope. Reason and judgment will not pierce the veil that hides the future."

"That I will do. You say rightly that reason and judgment will not prophesy for us. But your reason and your judgment have helped mine and I am grateful to you. A year back you were trying to capture me and take me to my death. Now I come to you for counsel. What, I wonder, is yet to happen to me? My pride is gone. But perhaps I need to be humbled further still."

The two parted like friends. Each had inspired the other with liking and respect. And Zatthu showed deference to Marcus' advice by going directly from Cæsarea to Nazareth, that he might there see Eliud Merari again.

First however he said goodbye to Shobek who found himself forced, much to his own dissatisfaction, to abide with his father and resume the humble occupation he had left to follow Zatthu.

"Let me go with you," he implored. "I cannot just sell figs and oil day after day now that I have wandered with you and Kelita all over Palestine and . . ."

"And laid Roman legionaries low with giant clubs and with ponderous stones," added Zatthu as the big Hebrew hesitated to complete the sentence. "No, Shobek. It must not be. May Jehovah reward you for your devotion to the cause. In my heart I shall bless you for it as long as I live. But it has failed. What I shall do now I do not know. But for a time at least I wish to be by myself and wander and think alone. So, Goodbye it must be."

At Nazareth he found Merari as mentally alert as ever and

to the old man he showed the same chastened spirit in which he had sought Marcus.

"Jehovah," he said, "smote those with whom He was sore displeased. He chided Moses for resisting his will. He took away King David's child and cast the King down into the very dust. So has He dealt with me. A year ago I looked with scorn on Jesus of Nazareth and I proudly planned to call down Jehovah's vengeance upon Rome. And here I am, raised from my dying bed by this same Jesus of Nazareth and pardoned by Pilate when Roman justice demanded that I should hang upon the cross."

"Do as David did, my son," was the old man's answer. "Thank Jehovah. He has done for you the best that He can ever do for any child of his. Now you can begin to see and know the truth."

"I wish I could," said Zatthu dejectedly. "That is the very thing I want to do. But, alas, I am still groping."

The two then talked long together. Merari reiterated his belief in Jesus of Nazareth, but how he was to bring in a new day for Israel, he, Merari, could not say. He felt sure however that something mighty was to happen very soon. A great light was to dawn, but first there was to be darkness, a strange and terrible darkness. That was all he could say.

"Ought I to go and join those publicans and fishermen he has drawn about him?" inquired Zatthu. "Is that what Jehovah is asking of me to complete my humiliation?"

"No. Jesus has not called you, nor have you yet the feeling about him that should make you one of his personal followers. Watch and wait. If the light comes, as I am sure it will, you will see it and will know then what to do."

This suggestion so well accorded with Zatthu's own inclination that he determined to follow it. Watch and wait! Yes, that must be his lot till the call to some clearly defined path came unmistakably. And he was not sorry to be inactive. As he had told Shobek, he felt the desire to be much by

himself. His great purpose having come utterly to naught, his life now seemed to him much like a tree that had budded vigorously but had been prevented from bearing fruit by successive stormy blasts. How should he make it blossom again?

With this mood upon him he lingered several days at Nazareth, studying the people there, studying his nation's Sacred Books which he borrowed from Merari, and trying to see all that his own past had to teach him. Then he went down to the Sea of Galilee and on to Capernaum.

He was not eager to go to the house of Aristarchus, in spite of the fact that Thisoa was never long absent from his thoughts. For again and again it came to him strongly that it was his country, his oppressed and misguided country, that should engross his mind. A prophet had come, yet only to cause division. As a Hebrew and a patriot he must for a time at any rate put aside all thoughts of his own private gratification.

But he had left these ever loyal friends with an almost stern refusal to accept their hospitality and with the assertion that his offences against Rome had put a lasting barrier between him and them; and now the barrier was down. This they had doubtless learned from Marcus. But it would be only a decent recognition of their kindness to go to them and show himself as a man no longer under the Roman ban, and say a less austere and gloomy farewell.

As he drew near the house of the Greek merchant, he found himself anticipating the cordial welcome that would surely be given him. To his astonishment however the first to welcome him was Shobek who saw him coming and ran to meet him.

"Why, Shobek!" he exclaimed, "how is it that I find you here? Have you got so used to wandering that you are going to keep it up all your days? I should be sorry to think I had done that for you."

"I've wandered too much to be a trader again. Three days of that was quite enough for me."

“And so you came here?”

“And so I came here.”

“Are you going to attach yourself to Aristarchus?”

“Yes, I begged him to let me serve him. He said that he should be very glad to have with him on his travels a man that wielded as big a club as I did.”

“He is a shrewd man, Shobek. He has the wisdom for which the Greeks are famous. I shall tell his wife and daughter they need never be anxious now when he goes upon his journeys.”

“If the need comes I’ll fight hard for him. But I don’t want to crack any more heads or break any more backs, even of robbers. A chance to make these big hands of mine useful is all I desire. Trinion gives me things to do. I was setting out a camphire bush for him when I saw you coming and ran to greet you.”

“You are a fortunate man, Shobek. I wish I could busy myself in setting out camphire bushes and could keep these wearing and perplexing thoughts out of my mind.”

“Why not do it? Moses kept Jethro’s flocks. Why shouldn’t you set out camphire bushes for Aristarchus?”

“Because I must travel up and down the land, watch what is going on, think about it and see what I can make out of it all.”

“We Hebrews must all of us watch what is going on and see what we can make out of it. I shall do that even while I am working over camphire bushes. The man from Nazareth is stirring the whole nation. I have to think about him as well as you.”

“And what *do* you think about him, Shobek?”

“Only this, that I would stand with him rather than with his enemies.”

“And shall you? Will he need you sometime?”

“As to that, I am in the dark. I shall work here with Trinion till the light comes.”

"I am in the dark too, Shobek; and I shall wander and watch and think till the light comes."

"Perhaps it will come in a way that we don't look for."

"That is well said. For a long while after you joined me at Cæsarea things happened that we did not look for till at last we found shelter in a robbers' den, and I was raised up from death to life by the man who had wrecked my hopes and brought me low. Yes, you say well, Shobek, that the light may come in a way we do not look for. But let us not fail to see it when it comes. But I must let you go now to your camphire bush while I seek my good friends within."

Zatthu received the warm welcome he had been sure of, but again he refused the hospitality generously proffered and after a brief hour departed. He made it plain that his one thought now was for his people and that he must mingle with them, now here now there, think for them and labor for them whenever he saw the way open. But he assured these unfailingly loyal friends that, having been loaded with kindness by them when everything looked dark for him, he should not forget them now that he was rejoicing in his freedom, and that they would see him from time to time.

To Thisoa this was slender comfort and her heart was very sore as Zatthu went away. She was still unaware that Zatthu's feeling for her was very deep, even deeper than his fervent desire to serve his distracted nation.

VII

It was with a resolute but by no means a hurried step that Zatthu walked away from the house that in dark days had been a home to him. He was to live for his people. Their taste of joy and sorrow alike was to be his also. Yet to have seen Thisoa and then to turn away from her without opening his whole mind to her and drawing courage from her sympathy was hard. His determination was unshaken, but his heart was insurgent and sore. He would gratify its yearnings by lingering just a little while where her presence might still be almost felt.

So he wandered to the old olive which he knew to be a favorite resort of hers and sat beneath it while he looked out on the blue expanse of Gennesaret.

For a while he found a melancholy satisfaction in reviewing the memories of his sojourn under Aristarchus' roof. But quickly the forbidding future loomed before him; the burden of his thoughts grew oppressive; and he relieved himself by a long drawn sigh. As he did so he became conscious of a presence that the intensity of his own bitter contemplation had prevented him from noting before. And even before he had thoroughly roused himself and turned his eyes full on this intruder upon his solitude, he heard the timid yet startling inquiry,

"Do you want to see Jesus of Nazareth?"

It was a young girl, hardly more than a child, that stood near him — yes, a child in stature but with a serious and strangely wistful face. He looked at her in wonder for a moment and then said,

"What makes you ask that?"

"Because I thought you were in trouble. You didn't see me though I have been standing here for quite a while, and you

looked to me very sad, and at last you gave a great long sigh."

"But why should Jesus of Nazareth help me?"

"Oh, he helps every one. He loves to help. There isn't any thing he can't do."

"How do you know that?"

"Because he helped me. Would you like to know what he did for me?"

"Yes, I should be very glad to know" — "more glad than you have any idea of," added Zatthu to himself. For the child's innocent trustful speech was like balm to his troubled spirit.

"I hope you will believe what I say," said the girl as she sat down beside him. "I should not tell you if it was not true. Once or twice before what I am going to tell of happened, I told a lie and felt dreadfully about it afterward. But I never tell any now. It would be an awful thing to do, for Jesus would feel very, very sad if he knew of it. He would say: 'That was the little girl I gave back to her father and mother after she had died, and now she tells a lie.' For that is what he did. I was very sick. The doctor could not cure me and I died. Oh, you don't know how grieved my mother was; and my father and my friend Thisoa, they felt very badly too. But Jesus of Nazareth came into the room where I was lying and told me to arise. And then I just had to come back to life. Wasn't it wonderful?"

"You were really dead?"

"Yes, I was seeing beautiful lights and faces, but I had to turn away from them and come back to father and mother and Thisoa. You do believe it all, don't you?"

The inquiry was so wistfully made that Zatthu gave the girl a reassuring smile and answered,

"Yes, I believe it and do you want to know why?"

"Yes, indeed. Do tell me!"

"It is because, only a little more than two Sabbaths ago, I was dying myself and Jesus called me back to life."

"Oh," cried the child delightedly, "then you know how wonderful he is. But," she went on, looking serious again, "why don't you go to him now and tell him what it is that troubles you? I am sure he would make you happy again."

"Perhaps he would. Perhaps he will. But there are troubles that are not cured as easily as sicknesses. Have you ever seen him since he brought you back to life?"

"Only once or twice when there were people all about him. I do long sometimes to see him and talk with him, but he has all the people in the world to help, and after what he did for me it would be wrong of me to trouble him any more. Just think how busy he would be if all those whom he cured were to seek him and try to tell him how grateful they were!"

"Busy indeed," said Zatthu wonderingly, for the child's delicacy of feeling and perception deeply impressed him. "But you like to speak about him to others, I can see; and so you thought I ought to go to him because I was in trouble?"

"Yes; whenever I see any persons sad or sick, I can't help wanting to tell them to go to Jesus of Nazareth."

"They will bless you for it, I am sure. I thank you with all my heart, though Jesus has already done for me what no one else could have done. Yes, I thank you and I want to know your name."

"I am Naomi."

"And you are a friend of Thisoa?"

"Yes, yes! She is my very dear friend. I love her more than any one but father and mother. Do you know her too?"

"Yes, I know her. I am Zatthu. I was in her father's house for a whole month a year ago."

"Oh, are you Zatthu, the man of my own people whom Thisoa hid so cunningly from the Romans? She told me all about that, but I never saw you when you lived in the house. I should think you would love Thisoa too."

"I think all do who know her."

"I am sure they do. I do not see how they could help it. But if you are Zatthu and know her so well, I should think you might help her. You know how sad she is don't you?"

"N-no," said Zatthu hesitatingly, not quite knowing how to stop the child and yet feeling that she was beginning to touch on things he ought not to hear.

"Yes, she is sometimes very sad. She sits here under this tree and looks out on the lake for a long time without speaking. I have sometimes thought she was missing some one; but I don't know who it could be. She has her father and mother — her father does go away very often but it's never for long — and she never had any brothers and sisters. I wonder if it is some friend that she wants very much to see. But people don't miss friends like that, do they?"

"Shouldn't you miss Thisoa if she was very long away so that you could not see her?"

"Oh, yes! I should miss her more than I could tell. But she is my very, very own friend, not like any other — and then, why, she is Thisoa and she is so dear!"

"I am glad she has you for a friend and I am sure it makes her happy to talk with you. It has made me feel better than I did. When I think of Jesus of Nazareth, as I shall do every day, I shall sometimes think of you also. I am going away from Capernaum now; but some day I shall come back again, and when I do I shall want to see you, and now, Goodbye."

"Goodbye. Are you going where you will see Jesus of Nazareth?"

"Not right away. Some time perhaps I may see him."

"If you should ever see him and talk with him, would you tell him that the little girl he brought to life after she was dead thinks of him every day?"

"Yes, I will tell him that if I should ever talk with him and make him understand how grateful I am to him for healing me."

Zatthu's mind was deeply stirred as he walked away. The girl's innocent and artless speech had roused in him perturbing questions. Was Thisoa's interest in him more than friendly? Was it of him that she was thinking when she sat long in silence by the lakeside? And was it with tender and intense solicitude that she had begged Jesus to heal him? He wondered if he ought to go to her now, reveal the depth of his own feeling for her and invite her to show him her own heart. But no! It was not the moment to do that. He would cling to his purpose and devote himself now wholly to his people. If it was Jehovah's will that he was to share all with this alien girl, the way would in due time be shown. He would leave Capernaum at once and set his face toward Jerusalem.

VIII

The multitude of the heavenly host that appeared to the wondering shepherds when Jesus was born at Bethlehem must have watched him with profound solicitude through all his years upon the earth. By them was felt the depth of his sorrow, the awfulness of his conflicts and the unutterable anguish of his solitude. For to them was known his mission of redemption and the meaning of the sacrifice for which it called.

Nor could the hosts of darkness have been ignorant of the nature of the Son of Man. It was to shatter their own power and to save men from its blighting influence that he was born into the world. They too understood his mission. Too well they understood it; malignantly they tried to thwart it; exultant would they be to see it fail.

So countless unseen multitudes were watching Jesus of Nazareth. They had watched him unceasingly, absorbingly, as he met temptation, wrought miracles of healing, was transfigured on the mountain and roused both hatred and devotion when he spoke as no other man had ever spoken. And more anxiously than ever did they watch him now that the last days were at hand. Gethsemane and Calvary were near. Would they bring the world redemption or limitless eternal loss? These invisible hosts of light and darkness were waiting to see! Yes, with a solicitude that was thrilling beyond all human power to understand, they were waiting to see.

And even so did those on the earth who saw and knew Jesus and who wondered at him, watch and wait. Eagerly, impatiently they were waiting. Friends and foes alike were restless over his failure to declare himself a king. Then would come his day of glory, thought the believing multitudes. Then will come his utter downfall, reasoned the scornful Pharisees. But he went on healing and teaching, and no

crisis came. So in eager expectancy his movements were observed all over Palestine.

The High Priest in Jerusalem observed them with the gravest concern. With his fellow ecclesiastics he felt that the very foundations of the ancient Hebrew worship were being destroyed. The people were mad to follow after this impostor who daily did the most shocking and impious things. To what follies would he lead these deluded throngs! Of what sacrilege would he make them guilty! They must eye him with vigilance and forstall his wicked schemes.

Their thought was shared by the Pharisees and the Herodians — the latter corrupt, selfish and time-serving, the former proud and intensely loyal to the Jewish tradition. But natively antagonistic though the two sects were, they were one in their venomous dislike of Jesus and their fear that he would set an unclean rabble over them. So they viewed his every act with suspicion and were ready to dog his steps.

And the people, so despised and so devoted — how ardently they longed for this beneficent healer to assume his kingship! What wonders would he then perform! How would he cast down the mighty and destroy the proud! And the blessings he would rain down on themselves, his faithful ones, would be measureless. It was with high fond hopes that they waited for their leader to show the world his greatness.

Yet with greater eagerness still his chosen disciples looked to the hour that should make them sit in his own reflected glory. Their selfish ambitions he rebuked. They were to be as little children, not to sit on thrones. Still, they could not believe the coming grandeur would fail to lift them into state and splendor. So they looked for it and yearned for it. Anxiously they watched their Master to note the first signs of its coming.

What was thus awaited all through Judæa and Galilee was anticipated also by those who figure largely in these pages. From his home in Nazareth Merari looked forth over the

Valley of Esdraelon and hoped to see a new day for Israel dawn. Marcus and Naarah, and Hacho too who was friend as well as servant, talked often of Jesus and wondered when and what he would do for his people. Thisoa's thought was ever turned to him, for she had a strange feeling that the light he was to usher in would banish her own darkness and take away the soreness of her heart. With Naomi, ever affectionate and ever warmly sympathizing, she shared this hope without revealing her pent-up emotion; and she found the little maid a true comforter. For she, who had felt the touch of the healing hand of Jesus, had no doubt of his power to make the entire world whole. To talk of him and of the wondrous things he said and did was the very joy of her heart.

Shobek also proved to be a friend in this troublous hour. The clear-sighted youth had seen in Jesus the dawning of a great hope; and Zatthu's failure, as he frankly assured Thisoa, made him still more ready to believe that the healer of Nazareth would be the redeemer of the nation. And if Aristarchus and Xenodice had too untroubled a life to make this same faith vivid in them, they yet shared it in a measure. All the land was talking of this worker of wonders and viewing him with the liveliest interest. To them too he therefore became a commanding figure, called to some strange and lofty destiny.

And Zatthu? Night and day the humbled but still zealous Hebrew kept his thoughts fixed on the man who had delivered him from death. Steadfastly, untiringly he too waited and watched. That mysterious future, with promise of weal or woe according to the hearts of the beholder, he, like all, failed to penetrate. Yet he was sure it would bring blessing; and to make it do so he would strive with all his strength. It was a prophet that had come to Israel — a prophet, he was now persuaded, greater than had been seen of old.

Meanwhile the Gentiles sat in darkness and were content. Rome on her seven hills felt peaceful and secure. The world

was at her feet. She neither knew nor thought of Him who said with a meaning she could not have fathomed, "I have overcome the world." With proud confidence she reflected that through her boundless dominions she had established the reign of peace and law. Through her unconquerable might the sun looked down by day and the stars by night on seas white with the sails of commerce and on vales that laughed with fertility and echoed to the reaper's song. Rebellion was as easily crushed as the tiniest snake beneath the rustic's heel. War in its pomp and its terrors was no more and the archway of Janus remained unopened year by year. Why then should the haughty mistress of the world take note that Judæa was in ferment and that all eyes there were turned toward the man whose fan was in his hand and who was making ready to gather the wheat into his garner and to burn the chaff? What if he brought a crisis in that restless strip of country? His own people might all look to him with high hope or with overshadowing fear. To the far-off city on the Tiber he was as nothing. So Rome slumbered on in her dense unbroken night, while the light was growing that was soon to lighten the world.

PART VI
DARKNESS AND DAY

I

Yes, Jesus of Nazareth was nearing the end of his mission upon earth. For more than two years the storm had been gathering about him. In its full fury it was soon to burst.

Hatred had followed him from the very moment when he began to speak and act. At Nazareth they would fain have killed him, and he left his childhood's home to dwell at Capernaum. Thence he went soon to Jerusalem to give mortal offence to the whole priestly class when he scourged out of the temple the traders and money-changers who defiled it and whose practices were yet sanctioned by the priests themselves. He went back to Capernaum and told it that it was worse than Sodom because the mighty works that had been done in it had not won it to repentance, and it would be brought down to hell. And the mighty works were done. They were done day after day. The multitudes were healed of all manner of diseases and a flame of joy and exaltation ran through all the country round. Those who were not the slaves of tradition hailed this friend and deliverer as one sent from on high.

And even at Jerusalem there were synagogue rulers who bowed to the purity and the majesty of Jesus in spite of the scorn and the wrath which he aroused. But they dared not follow or defend him, for the scorn and the wrath were deadly. This healer broke a Commandment of Moses, for even in their sacred Jerusalem he cured a man upon the Sabbath. And this crime he magnified by declaring that God was his Father and making himself equal with God. Then and there they would have slain him, but their fury called forth such a sublime strain of vindication and rebuke that they were utterly overawed. "Verily, verily, I say unto you, he that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me hath everlasting life. . . . But I know you, that ye have not the love of God in you. I am come in my Father's name, and ye

receive me not ; if another shall come in his own name, him ye will receive."

After such a tremendous issue between himself and those who would destroy him there must come a season of calm. He goes back to Capernaum. He teaches and he heals. The multitudes throng after him. He crosses Gennesaret. They follow him there. They are without bread and he feeds them. With these simple and unlearned people his power becomes unbounded, even as the Divine power grows in him without bound or measure. For his submission to the Father's will is absolute and that will begins to manifest its awful holiness. On towering Hermon it shines through him in unclouded brightness and the three beholding disciples are overwhelmed by its dazzling radiance.

But not in revealed sanctity upon the mountain side and not chiefly in deeds of love and mercy to the faithful is he now to spend his days. Jerusalem ever calls him — Jerusalem, with its turbulent life, its splendid ritual, its august temple ; Jerusalem, which had been the nation's glory and was still the nation's hope. It was there that the solemn feasts were held — the Feast of Tabernacles, the Feast of the Dedication and the Feast of the Passover. In these he must have a part. He set his steps toward Jerusalem when these ceremonies were to be observed.

Each time his coming brings a storm and he knows that it will be so. Fiercer, ever fiercer burns the hatred of his enemies. Loftier grows his own self-assertion — inevitably so, for the self that he is asserting is the Divine Self that is taking possession of him wholly. But the eyes of the Jews were blinded to that self and to them its utterances were therefore blasphemous. On the last, the great day, of the Feast of the Tabernacles, he cried, "If any man thirst, let him come unto me and drink. He that believeth on me, as the Scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water." Not to be endured were such words as these from the son of a car-

penter of Nazareth. Officers were sent by the chief priests and the Pharisees to seize him, but again the majestic mien and the awe inspiring words were a shield. The officers stood enthralled and could only report to those who had sent them, "Never man spake like this man."

Altogether human, however, is the figure that can thus use superhuman speech and rise to a superhuman grandeur. Jesus still is and to the last remains the very personification of gentleness and tenderness. To all who will open their minds and hearts to him he is the same kind friendly man that took little children in his arms and raised to life the widow's son. In these stormy days when he sees the Cross drawing very near and passionate hate ready to engulf him as a sea, how like balm to his spirit must have been every opportunity to do a deed of mercy or to pass into a sphere of true, understanding affection! He turns away from his raging and malignant enemies to spend a quiet hour in the home of Martha and Mary; he gives sight to the man blind from his birth; from the man who was dumb he cast out the devil that possessed him; and he spoke the words that went to the very soul of the woman he had saved from a cruel death.

It is in Judæa, not far from Jerusalem, or in the city itself, that he does these things. Not very far from it does he ever wander now, and to it he once more goes when the Feast of the Dedication comes round. And he goes to astound the priests and the Pharisees by his claims. "I and my Father are one," he now asserts, and they who heard him took up stones to stone him. But again they are impotent and "he escaped out of their hands."

This tempest of passion and malignity must be allowed to quiet. Once more he shuns the atmosphere of persecution and misunderstanding, and this time he withdraws beyond the Jordan to the country where John at first baptized. Once more he refreshes his soul by speaking to simple unembittered hearts, and by ministering to any who are in need. Here

many believed on him. Here he was visited by those Pharisees, friendly but all too few, who came to warn him against Herod; and here he wept over Jerusalem because it would not take the salvation which he brought and was therefore doomed to perish.

It was this same deep tender yearning affection that now called him back into Judæa. Well did the two sisters, Mary and Martha, understand it, and they now summoned him in their hour of need. Their brother Lazarus was sick and they sent word of it to Jesus, feeling sure that that would be enough. He came, but not at once; and he found that Lazarus had died. For this friend whom he loved he is sorely grieved and he sheds tears. He sheds tears and then brings him back to life, thus completing those deep contrasts that transcend the range of a merely human nature and a merely human experience. The Jesus who said "I am meek and lowly of heart," was the Jesus through whom the divine glory shone upon Mount Hermon. The Jesus who let the woman bathe his feet with her tears and wipe them with her hair was the one who made the hostility of the priests and the Pharisees blaze into unquenchable hatred by his scathing words of rebuke. Every time he stood before them he was the stern accuser who called them to account for their sins, and infuriated them by the very majesty of his presence and his speech. For it was no petty spirit of self-love or of revenge that spurred these men on against him and made them his implacable foes. It was his self-assertion even more than his censure that intensified their rage. The feeling that drove them on to seek his life was not merely wounded pride, but horror — horror at words and deeds that outraged their ancient holy worship and smote at the very heart of the nation's life. Was not this life given and directed by Jehovah even from the days of Abraham? And this man, this carpenter's son, made himself one with the awful Jehovah to whom they alone in all the world bowed down! It was blasphemy. It was leading the

people astray. It would bring down a curse from Jehovah himself if it were not visited with the most summary punishment. And there was but one way to avoid the wrath of Him who had showed himself of old a jealous God. This blasphemer must be forever silenced. So the chief priests and the Pharisees met to see what they must do. By that strange irony which often makes it seem as if a higher hand than human were shaping human things, they met just after Jesus had called back Lazarus from the tomb. The life of him who gave life they were eager to destroy. Indeed this very act of love and friendship was made to testify against him. It was one of the many proofs that by miracles he was winning the people away from the worship of the living God. Their wrath was fierce. It supplied them with resolution. Caiaphas, the high priest, voiced the intensity of their feeling and declared that one man must die for the people and the nation perish not.

But Jesus knew that his hour had not yet come and once more he betook himself out of the way of harm. He withdrew to the town of Ephraim in northern Judæa; and here and at Jericho and in the borders of Samaria he healed the lepers and the blind, he blessed little children, he read the heart of the generous publican Zaccheus, and for the third time he told his disciples that at Jerusalem he was to be put to death and to rise on the third day.

II

One of the group of Pharisees who went to the country beyond Jordan to warn Jesus against Herod was Zatthu. The Nazarene whom he had once deemed a menace to the nation he now regarded as its hope. Startled indeed he had sometimes been as he listened to Jesus' solemn and inspired insistence upon oneness with the dread Jehovah. In the chambers of his soul he felt a shock when he heard these sublime utterances. And he heard nearly all of them; for whenever Jesus drew the Jews about him in Jerusalem and awed and angered them at once by his majestic speech, Zatthu had been one of the attending throng. But if he was startled by these unparalleled claims, it was only for a moment. Deeper and ever deeper sank the conviction in his mind that a greater than the prophets was here.

Not for him however was immediate discipleship. The twelve had been chosen to walk with their Master day by day. The Seventy had been sent forth to gather their own harvest. But not all those who believed in Jesus were called to follow him publicly or to teach and to cast out devils in his name. Nicodemus held himself in readiness to do what service he might when the hour of need came. There were other Pharisees that did the same. Zatthu did the same. He, like others who saw in Jesus the Redeemer of the Jewish nation, looked confidently to the time when he should be truly a king — yes, a king who should dim the glory and the greatness of Solomon. When that time came, he, Zatthu, would strengthen his hands. Till that time came he would use what power and influence he had to shield and safe-guard this man whose enemies daily grew in number and in bitterness.

What a strange path this proud-spirited Hebrew had had to travel! Yet he had traveled it. What a painful circuit he had had to make! Yet he had made it. The path had led

him up the heights of self-renunciation; but he had climbed unshrinkingly even when the way was icy and sheer. And beginning with an elation that had made him feel he was almost another Moses or Elijah, he had come round to the belief that he was only an erring child. To realize this had cost him many a pang, and many an hour of conflict when the old proud self called for the homage he had once received but which he had now to give to another who was infinitely worthier than he. He had conquered in the struggle, but it had left its marks. He looked years older than he did when he faced Pilate as the chosen instrument of an offended and avenging God — yes, and older than when he appeared again before the procurator as a broken and disappointed man. His eyes were sunken but as bright as ever. His face was thin. Faint lines could already be traced upon his brow. A gravity that was almost stern and forbidding was the settled expression of his face. Yet he did not bear himself as a man who was crushed. There was a latent energy in his walk and all his movements, and when he spoke, even though his words were measured, there was weight and decision in his tones. If he was of the meek who were to inherit the earth, the inheritance was not to come through idle waiting.

It might be supposed that after thus fully accepting the leadership of Jesus he would seek him out, own allegiance, and strengthen his devotion through that personal intercourse which is more potent far than the word spoken to the many. Yet he had not done so and it was his humility that had kept him thus aloof. The world was running after this holy and inspired man. The people would not let him alone and he could but have weary hours when he craved above all things a respite from the importunities of his own followers and the press of the multitudes who viewed him with adoration. All this Zattu realized, even as he made one of those who hung upon his words. So he quietly waited for the time to come

when he was manifestly called into the very presence of this man he was more than willing to serve.

That time came when he and other friendly Pharisees learned of Herod's plot to kill him. Of this he should be warned. Accordingly they crossed the Jordan and sought the place where they knew him to be. They found him and on Zatthu it fell to be their spokesman. And here was the opportunity for him to say, "I am he whom you healed and now I would gladly give my life for you." But he did not say it. He knew that it was not necessary. As he stood face to face with Jesus, he was conscious that in some heaven-sent way this man who knew what was in men was reading his very soul. The eye that looked so searchingly into his saw his whole history written there. Yes, he saw it and he made it manifest that he saw it; for his own eye gave an answering look that thrilled Zatthu through and through. It said as plainly as words could say it: "It was not in vain that I called you from death to life. The blessing of Jehovah is yours."

So profoundly moved was Zatthu that some moments passed before he could command himself to speak, and those who had come with him wondered at his silence. But finally he made known his errand, only to marvel at the answer it called forth, even as those who listened to Jesus again and again found themselves wondering what strange deep import there was in his words.

"Go ye and tell that fox, 'Behold, I cast out devils and I do cures today and tomorrow, and the third day I shall be perfected.'"

Such was the answer to their warning message. "What does it mean?" they asked each other as they wended their way back again. None knew, but the mention of the "third day" gave Zatthu an uneasy feeling. He knew that more than once before Jesus had declared that he should be slain and rise on the third day. Were the words they had just heard another prediction that the life of Jesus was to end in defeat

instead of triumph? Something of this kind Merari had seemed to see portending. What could it mean? Surely this man even more than Elisha could make the hosts of heaven smite down those who would destroy him. He could not understand, but he would be watchful and, if need be, active. He was a Pharisee. He was Zattu. Some influence he could exert in behalf of Jesus in case his enemies should threaten his very life.

And he soon found that they did so threaten it. It was not very long after he and his friends had sought Jesus beyond the Jordan that the priests and Pharisees consulted how to put an end to Jesus and his teaching, and Caiaphas declared that one man must die to save the nation's life. Zattu straightway learned of this and sought Caiaphas to protest against this deliberately planned violence.

Caiaphas readily gave ear to him. He could not but listen to the man who less than three years earlier had had all Jerusalem under his spell. True, his failure to achieve what he had promised had brought him into some contempt; and his known friendliness to the impostor who was a growing menace to the worship of Jehovah was noted with deep disfavor. But he had native force and power. He could still thrill the multitudes. He was a man to reckon with and to be heard.

Caiaphas met him with bland civility, but their interview, peaceable at first, soon grew stormy and passionate. Zattu began by mildly insisting that Jesus was wholly blameless in his life, that he won the hearts of the people by curing their diseases and showing them kindness, and that his words were a summons to purity of deed and thought. To this plea Caiaphas replied by dwelling on Jesus' claims to equality with God, even with the dread Jehovah; for such claims a true Hebrew patriot could only regard as blasphemies.

"That," rejoined Zattu, "would depend entirely on the one who made the claims."

"Exactly," said Caiaphas, still smiling and suavely iron-

ical, "and the man in this case is a mere carpenter of Nazareth."

"And Moses was a man who had to flee for safety because he had struck down an Egyptian."

The brow of Caiaphas darkened and his tones were strident as he answered,

"Moses was chosen by God and of that he gave proof."

"What proof?"

"He performed miracles."

"So does Jesus."

"Yes, by Beelzebub."

"He heals the blind, the leprous and the palsied without number. He calls the dead and dying back to life. Is that the work of Beelzebub?"

"Why not? He does it to mislead."

"It is two thousand years almost since Abraham was called from Ur. Our Sacred Books give us a record of all that time. Do they tell us that Beelzebub has ever wrought such manifold good works before?"

"It was he surely that gave the Egyptian sorcerers their power."

"And the Egyptian sorcerers turned their rods into serpents. Did they heal the sick and the blind?"

"No, nor do I believe that Jesus really does such things. He is an impostor, a deceiver. He makes the people believe that he has powers he does not possess."

"Ah, then he does not do these things through Beelzebub? You claim now that he does not do them at all?"

Caiaphas was furious. He had shifted his ground and had been taxed with doing so. He was determined at any rate to be consistent now.

"No," he exclaimed passionately, "he does not do them at all. He is the friend of Beelzebub and through Beelzebub he gets a strange unholy power over credulous minds. He makes them think they see things that never happen."

"Ah, but they do happen."

"I tell you, they do not."

"And I can bear witness that they do."

"You can bear witness that they do? What are you saying? What do you mean?"

"I mean that when I was hurt and dying Jesus gave me back to life."

The high priest looked at Zatthu for a moment in blank astonishment. Then he became so convulsed with anger that he could hardly command himself to speak. But he did not forget the dignity of his high office, and after a few moments he said calmly, but with bitter irony,

"Oh! so you too are one of the deluded ones! We should hardly have expected that of Zatthu—Zatthu who not long since was making us think he was raised up by Jehovah to free Israel!"

"I *was* one of the deluded ones," replied Zatthu, still calm but with a growing sternness of voice and manner. "I was so deluded that I thought Jesus was an impostor and I was chosen by Jehovah to break my people's yoke of bondage. For my folly and my pride I was brought very low by Jehovah. The people would not heed me, and rightly, because they saw in Jesus their true deliverer. I was forsaken, and sheltered by thieves. At last, wounded and sick and the breath almost gone out of me, I was restored to life and strength by this same Jesus I had despised. I humbled myself then and Jehovah opened my eyes. I came to see that Jesus was Messiah. He is greater than Moses, greater than Solomon, greater than any of the prophets that heard the voice of God. He has come to redeem Israel and raise it to a glory of which it has never dreamed. And yet you, you and your brother priests to whom the nation's highest weal has been entrusted, are ready to degrade your sacred office and to seek the death of the very man who has been sent to save us."

For a moment Caiaphas was awed by this fierce denunciation, for Zatthu spoke like an accusing prophet. But anger quickly resumed possession of him and loosened all restraint.

"Yes," he answered, his eyes blazing and his voice quivering with passion, "and his death shall soon be brought about. This man Messiah! This carpenter from Nazareth, this friend of sinners, greater than Moses! It is impious to talk so. Jehovah will curse you for thus betraying his own chosen nation!"

"The traitor is you! Yes, you and all the others who are so infamously plotting to destroy this holy man! But you will not succeed! You can never succeed! Jehovah will safeguard him from your hands as he safe-guarded Elisha and Daniel long ago."

"Enough!" cried Caiaphas, rising in the vehemence of his wrath. "I will listen to you no longer. You are giving proof yourself of this man's malign and unhallowing influence. He has made a devil take possession of you, or you would not so defame our holy men who spoke the word of Jehovah. Go! I will not hear you, but I can only pity you as one whom a demon has bereft of reason."

"It is my wish to go," said Zatthu, who had also risen. "I see that words are useless. But look at me! look at me calmly and searchingly, Caiaphas, and tell me, if you can, that I bear the marks of one who has lost his reason. Tell me, if you can, that Nicodemus and other Pharisees I might name who believe that Jesus is a holy man, are senseless, distraught, or treacherous. It is reverence that rules in our hearts, reverence for what is good and pure. It is hatred that rules in yours, a bitter, malignant hatred that blinds your eyes and turns your hands to evil. Jehovah judge between me and you! Yes, Jehovah, who is like a refiner's fire and like fullers' soap! He will come to judge, and who shall abide the day of his

coming? You? You who are plotting to slay an innocent man?"

"Yes, I."

Zatthu gazed at him searchingly for a moment. Then he said sorrowfully,

"It is you that are to be pitied," and went away.

III

In telling Caiaphas that he and his party could not take the life of Jesus, Zatthu had been sincere. The fact remained however that these enemies would stop at nothing in compassing their end. Mere prudence therefore seemed to require that Jesus should be protected in every possible way. So thinking, Zatthu determined to go to Capernaum and ask Marcus to intercede for him.

As he made the journey he could not help commenting on the extraordinary change the course of events had wrought in his own feeling and conduct. Less than three years before he had been taken before Pilate as a conspirator against the Roman power. Now he was about to ask that same power to prevent his countrymen from doing a violent and shameful deed. How very strange! These tyrannical and brutal Romans, if he could carry out his purpose, were to be Jehovah's instrument to prevent the priests of his own chosen people from staining their hands with guilt. As he thought it all over he was almost impelled to turn back to Jerusalem, his errand seemed so preposterous. But did not Jehovah use the very Egyptians whom he afterwards punished to bring Jacob and his sons into Egypt? Verily the ways of the Most High were beyond the comprehension of men. Zatthu was sure that Jesus was Jehovah's servant and needed protection. He saw but one way to protect him and so he kept on his way till he reached Capernaum.

He had not sought Marcus before since he had talked with him in Cæsarea. The centurion received him very cordially, made it plain that he was glad to renew the acquaintance and lent a willing ear to his plea. But when he had heard Zatthu's story to the end he said very positively that he could take no such action as Zatthu wished.

"The whole matter is entirely outside the scope of my power

and influence," he declared. "It cannot be murder or crime that your countrymen, through their own priests, are plotting. What they attempt will surely be by process of law."

"Law! Law!" said Zatthu reflectively. "And will that mean justice? As you have watched trials and courts have you gained respect for them?"

"Yes, much. They err. So do men err all the time in all the various things they do. But these same erring men took a long step forward when they began to accuse one thought guilty and try him instead of acting on mere impulse and suspicion."

"But of what use is a trial if those that judge have made up their mind beforehand that the accused *is* guilty and are determined to condemn him?"

"Of little use in that case, I admit."

"And that is what will happen if Jesus is arrested and tried."

"That will depend upon who his judges are."

"Who will they be?"

"It is impossible to say. I do not know before what court he would be brought. Your own countrymen will accuse him and try him. But your country is not free as you Hebrews all long to see it. The final judgment might be given by Herod or it might be given by Pilate."

"Supposing it were Pilate that gave it, could not you make him see that Jesus is upright and pure and ought to go free?"

"No," said Marcus, after a little reflection, "I could not do that. When I went to him to intercede for you and Shobek, I gave him my opinion of Jesus. I told him I believed Jesus to be blameless and no menace to the Roman power. Further than that I cannot go."

"Was it not your influence that made him pardon Shobek and me?"

"Partly. Yet I could have done nothing for you had you not so fortunately fought for Roman soldiers against a band

of thieves. Because you did that, the good word I said for you sank deep into Pilate's mind. But if I have any influence with him, it is because I have never been officious and meddling. If I had been constantly trying to force my views upon him just because my father is the prefect of Rome, I should only have turned him against me."

"Is he a just man?"

"Judge him by his own actions as governor of this country. How do you interpret them?"

"That even when viewed most favorably they show that he can be harsh and cruel."

"You have a right to view them so. Yet I can assure you that he has no love of cruelty. He is sometimes stern. Justice has often to be that. But like every true Roman he has a deep respect for justice, and he would not willingly do an unjust or a merciless deed. He found it a little hard to think he ought to pardon you and Shobek, but in the end he took real pleasure in doing it."

"Could he be just if it cost him the goodwill of those he wished to please?"

"Frankly, I doubt that. Pilate is at heart rather a timid man."

"Yet you will not try to give him strength?"

"No. For the reasons I have named."

"A very wonderful and holy life may be at stake."

"But if Jesus has been sent by Jehovah, why will he not have the protection of Jehovah, like your blameless men and prophets of long ago?"

"It is many hundred years since the power of Jehovah has been so revealed."

"Yet are you not hoping that it will be again revealed and that through its workings Jesus will be lifted into an unheard of greatness?"

"I cannot deny that that is my ardent hope."

"You even think, do you not, that not by the sword and

pitched battle but by miracles, the hosts who oppose Jesus will be annihilated?"

"Yes, I do think exactly that. Jesus does not resist his enemies, he evades them. With his own hand he would hardly use the sword. His temper and his counsels are mild. Yet he sometimes rebukes sin in a strain of grandeur and speaks of coming woe and tribulation as one might who was himself to bring about mighty convulsions and stormy times."

"If he has been sent by Jehovah to work such changes, he must surely be under the keeping of Jehovah."

"It would seem so. You are perhaps right and you, a Roman, might well tax me with a lack of faith in the God I have worshipped since I was a child. But remember, I have come directly from the places where his enemies are bitter, resolute and active. My very anxiety makes me see danger and fills me with uneasiness. I should feel that Israel's last hope was gone should Jesus now come to his death."

"Perhaps his death would only be the beginning of the good he was sent to accomplish."

"That is a strange thought."

"Strange, yet almost justified by your own prophets as I have read them."

"Yes, and Merari seems sometimes to have the same vision of what is to be. Yet I cannot see things so. Moses and Joshua and David and Elijah wrought what they did for Israel through their lives and not through their deaths. But Jehovah's will be done. I cannot really believe that the life of Jesus is to be sacrificed before he accomplishes that will. And I shall presently go back to Jerusalem to serve him in any way I can. That I am sure is what Jehovah wishes of me. I have failed myself, but Jesus cannot fail."

"No," said Marcus, as they parted. "That pure and blameless life surely cannot fail to do that for which it was brought into the world."

IV

Slowly and thoughtfully Zatthu went from his interview with Marcus toward the house of Aristarchus. How would these staunch, tried friends receive him? They might well show coolness, for he had not fulfilled his promise that he would come to them from time to time. Not once had he been near them since the brief visit he had made directly after being pardoned by Pilate. Could he make them feel that he appreciated their unvarying kindness in the face of this seeming indifference?

Before going to the house itself he sought the olive tree that commanded the waters of Gennesaret. Here he half hoped that he should find the little maid with whom he had such a pleasant and, it might be said, such an illuminating talk. Perhaps she was no longer little. Nearly a year had passed since she had so suddenly revealed herself to him under the olive, and maids grow fast beneath the warm oriental skies. He would be sorry to find her taller and more mature, for her artlessness had been her charm. But the olive was sheltering no one, so after sitting at its foot for a while and thinking over all the stirring and deep experiences that had come to him since he first entered Capernaum, he directed his steps to the house.

The greeting that Aristarchus gave him roused in him a feeling of chagrin. Not a trace of resentment, no charges of neglect or ingratitude: nothing but unstinted hospitality and warm affection. Such friendliness he had not earned.

"You must have quite a story to tell," said the Greek after he had expressed his delight in seeing him again. "My wife and daughter will want to hear all that you have seen and done — yes, and Shobek too. I will send word to them all to come into the atrium and you shall meet them and talk to them there."

In the atrium they gathered and there Zattu again found friendly eyes beaming upon him and heard words of heartiest welcome. And yet he missed something that he found his heart was craving yet had no right to ask for or expect. Xenodice was unfeignedly cordial though she did remind him of the months that had passed since they had seen him; Shobek's joy was unbounded; but Thisoa—there was that in her manner that made him think of a flower closing its petals in spite of her kindly tones and her frank and friendly gaze. In that moment he seemed to see, as through curtains parted for a moment, that something in a woman's soul that can never be expressed in words.

"You make me ashamed," he said, after the greetings had been interchanged. "I have not kept my promise. I have let month after month go by without coming near you. And yet you receive me with the same warm-hearted generosity that you showed me when I was a condemned and hunted man.

"Yes, you make me ashamed, much more ashamed than I should be if you showered me with the reproaches I have merited. But it is not ingratitude and it is not indifference that has kept me away. When I was here almost a year ago and told you I would come and report my doings to you now and then, I honestly meant to do so. I wanted to do so, for your kindness has made this home the sweetest spot to me upon the earth.

"But I am a Hebrew and you cannot understand all that that means. I have told you that before and I must tell it to you now again. My people has the passion to be free. What a deep, burning, aching passion it is, you cannot know. Greece has had her day of glory. A great and noble day it was, but it ended and your countrymen do not look for it again. They live on under Roman rule and never even dream of sweeping it aside. And so too have we Hebrews had our day of glory. But our sun set only to rise again. We have the promise that it shall rise again and with a splendor that

the world has never known. And I have been watching for that sun to rise. As you know, I was deluded into believing that I, myself, was the herald of this wonderful bright-flaming dawn. I was cured of my folly. I was humbled. I was sick with self-reproach and a sense of shame. Those were the feelings that were still strongest in me when I parted from you ten long months ago.

“But even then the light was beginning to scatter the clouds that darkened my sky. That light, as you well know, came from the man who raised me from death to life, even from Jesus of Nazareth. And the light grew brighter and brighter as the days passed by. It banished every cloud. It flooded my very soul. Much of this time I have been following the steps of Jesus, I have been listening to his speech, I have been noting the deeds he did and measuring both words and deeds with those of our leaders and prophets of the ancient days. Doing this, I have seemed to look into this man’s soul, and surely there never was a soul more fit to be Jehovah’s dwelling-place. Once as I lay awake at night there flashed into my mind a verse from one of our Psalms: ‘I will not give sleep to mine eyes or slumber to mine eyelids till I find a place for Jehovah, an habitation for the mighty God of Jacob.’ And with an awed and startled feeling I thought to myself that this man Jesus had been preparing for the mighty Jehovah even such an habitation. And *He is* dwelling there, yes *He*, the God of Jacob, is abiding there as nowhere else on all the earth.

“If He dwells there it is to give light to the world. The light is coming. Oh, I feel that it is coming, and for it I have been watching and am watching still, even as one who has sat in a desert all through a black and stormy night and sighed for the morning. My soul is on fire with this fierce passionate longing. I carry it into my sleep. If I wake I find it burning within me. When daylight comes, it rules me and drives out all other thoughts. Only think of it! After hundreds of

years Jerusalem will be the mistress of all the world and all the nations shall flock to her and behold her glory. And better than all, the idols that are everywhere so blindly worshipped shall be thrown down and every knee shall bow to the mighty Jehovah.

"But not easily shall all this come to pass. Jesus has enemies. The very ones who should lift him into power and honor are his bitterest foes. As you doubtless know, he has for some time been teaching and healing in and about Jerusalem; and there the priests and Pharisees — to my shame I say it — have turned against him. Under the lead of Caiaphas, the high priest, they are seeking to destroy him. Vainly have I tried to turn Caiaphas from this wicked purpose. My words only roused him to wrath. So I have been to Marcus to beg his intercession. I have, indeed, just come from him. But he tells me he is powerless to interfere. So Jesus must find his protection in what support can be given him by his own disciples and by the many who like myself would give our lives for him at any time.

"But I must not forget that you are Greeks and cannot share this deep passion of my people to see Jerusalem the mistress of the world. The strength of my feelings has made me talk too long. Forgive me."

"You never talk too long," said Aristarchus. "Never have you failed to interest us profoundly when you have told us either of your experiences or of your hopes. We thoroughly respect your feeling even if we cannot share it — though perhaps we share it more fully than you realize. But while I should hate to chill your fervent patriotism, I cannot help asking you whether your people can rise to a position of power and greatness when they are so divided. How can Jesus unite them and make them into a mighty nation when some of them would die for him while those who ought to be his staunchest allies are eager to put him out of the way?"

"A natural query; but such has been our history. From

the time when Moses led my people out of Egypt they have been rebellious and easily moved to worship strange gods. Yet such as they are, Jehovah chose them to be his people. By signs and wonders He can turn them from dissension and faithlessness to faith, even as He did by thunder and lightning and thick cloud at Sinai. In a moment He could so declare Himself that the very ones who have scorned Jesus and pronounced him a blasphemer would follow in his train and shout Hosanna."

"May your hopes come true. But can you not absent yourself from Judæa for a time and linger with us long enough to let us really know you again I should be grieved if you still refused my hospitality."

"For a few days I will tarry with you, if you wish it. Jesus is just now shunning the places where his enemies are laying snares for him. He has left Jerusalem and will not return there, I feel sure, till the time of the Feast of the Passover. Then things of mighty moment may be said and done. I must be there before the Feast takes place."

A long conversation followed, in the course of which Zatthu was questioned about all the scenes and happenings that had been of peculiar interest during the time that he had spent in Judæa. He answered willingly and the old relation of friendly, confidential intercourse was again to a large degree established.

To a large degree — yet Thisoa was not what she had been in those early days of their acquaintance. She had then been the sympathetic friend and adviser, listening to Zatthu's plans, sharing his enthusiasm and sometimes giving him sage counsel or needed encouragement. Now she was deeply interested in all that he had to say; his unreserved belief in Jesus drew a warm response from her; the plots of Caiaphas and the priestly party filled her too with manifest concern. But the glowing youthful ardor and the animation that was so unfailing and so contagious had disappeared. There was

now underneath every expression of sympathy and feeling a deep womanly reserve. The wit and the sparkle that had given a wondrous charm to her presence were quite gone.

What was the meaning of the change, Zatthu could not help wondering when he found himself alone. Yet if he raised the question his own heart told him how to answer it. It told him too that, considering the real depth of his own feeling, he had done well in absenting himself so long after hearing little Naomi's revelations under the olive tree.

V

Still Zatthu did not make it his one purpose to declare to Thisoa how fully she had won his heart. It was in part his very self-reproach that prevented him from doing so. To have cherished so strong a feeling and to have neither made it known nor even shown himself in person through ten long months could but seem in Thisoa's eyes an almost unforgivable wrong. So at any rate he reasoned. But then, does any man realize how much a woman is ready to forgive if she has the positive assurance that she is loved?

Thinking as he did, Zatthu occupied himself for two or three days in visiting his old-time acquaintances in Capernaum and learning anew their attitude toward the man who had become the one commanding figure in Palestine. So he went about among the very Pharisees to whom two years before he had presented his own claims to leadership, and sought how far they had come to see, not in him but in Jesus, the hope of the Hebrew nation.

It was as an inquirer, not as a proselyte, that he went. He deemed it best to control his ardent spirit of discipleship. To display it might only bring jeers and scoffs. So he made his quest in patience — and with almost no satisfaction. A very few of the Pharisees, unwilling though they were to bring odium on themselves by asserting their views freely and emphatically, were yet ready to see in Jesus the promised Messiah. Most of them however viewed him with the scorn that he had kindled in their own class at Jerusalem.

At the end of the third day of this discouraging quest Zatthu went back to the house of Aristarchus in a sober mood. He was not disheartened. As he had told the household of Aristarchus, Jehovah could by a wondrous revelation of his own spirit make it plain that Jesus was sent by Him and make his very enemies his staunchest followers. But still it was dis-

quieting to see those who should be the leaders at this great time shut their eyes so determinedly to the light.

So feeling he entered the house, made his way into the atrium and found Thisoa there as he had more than once found her in those old days of their free and friendly intercourse. With the same smile that had given him hope and courage then when he was himself disconsolate, she now welcomed him. He seated himself by her side and with an answering smile began,

"It is a very pleasant feeling that comes to me as I find you sitting here. I can but think of those days when your father first took me in and when I came back here to get courage and sympathy from you after sounding the minds of my own people."

The smile vanished from Thisoa's face. With deep gravity she said,

"It seems strange that I was more ready even than many of your nation to believe in you and the call you felt you had from the Most High — yet so it was."

"I wonder why it was."

Thisoa still looked grave, but did not meet his eye, and did not speak.

"Did my enthusiasm make you believe in me?"

"I certainly did not doubt that it was genuine."

"Have you ever doubted it?"

"No, never."

"Yet you had to see that it was mistaken."

"Yes, I think I saw it a good while before you did."

"What made you see it?"

"Jesus of Nazareth. I had to believe that he was truly sent by your Jehovah. Then I knew that your call was not from above."

"In other words you knew that I was misguided, led astray by my own vanity, filled with a foolish and selfish ambition to

be as great a leader as the old time prophets and saviors of my nation."

"Oh, not so! not so! Your ambition was not a selfish one. It was generous and noble."

"It is generous in you to think so. But I have learned to see myself as I am, and the light has come to me, as it came to you, from Jesus of Nazareth."

"Is he to give light to all the world?"

"Yes, if the world will receive it. But it is not a light that it is altogether pleasant to receive. It is inflaming the priests and the Pharisees at Jerusalem with wrath and hatred. I resisted it for a long time, as you know."

"Yes, and I helped you to do so, for I too was blind then. I told you that Jesus was but for a day, while you were to break the Roman yoke and give your country a commanding place among the nations of the world. I have sometimes been ashamed that I helped to mislead you."

"It had to be. My pride was strong. It made me vain and presumptuous. It had to be broken."

Here Zatthu stopped as if not knowing what to say next, while Thisoa sat motionless and waited for him to go on. Presently he continued, speaking slowly and not trying to catch Thisoa's eye.

"But it has been broken, thoroughly and completely broken. I am a humbled man and a much changed one. My old ambition is gone; my ways of thinking are all changed."

Again there were a few moments of silence. Zatthu seemed to be painfully groping his way and Thisoa, sympathizing much, felt deeply that she must not even try to help him. He was humiliating himself, but in his very humiliation he was deepening her regard. Finding words again after a time, he said,

"Believing myself raised up to free my people, I kept that aim single and undivided in my heart. I let but one thought, one affection reign there—love of my bruised and bleeding

country. If a man's deep native yearnings for a home and all that makes a home ever rose in me, I stifled them. Instantly, utterly I stifled them lest they should weaken and betray my cherished purpose.

"But they were sometimes felt, for I am but a man; and once they were stirred so powerfully in me that I became alarmed. It was just before I had those last unhappy experiences that broke me down and would have brought about my death if it had not been for you.

"Shobek, Kelita and myself were to pass the night in a shepherd's hut on a mountain side near Safed. After night-fall I went alone to the top of the mountain and there I caught the gleam of Gennesaret in the distance, and instantly there arose in me a mighty longing for your home—yes, and for you. The memory of what passed between us in this very spot rushed in upon me like a flood. What strength you then put into my heart! What a rich full sympathy you gave to me and the cause I then thought holy! Yes, but I still thought it was holy, and that conviction gave me a bitter hour. It made me feel my longing for you was a sin against Jehovah; and so, wearily and painfully, I put it away. To my country and my country's God belonged my utter absolute devotion.

"But soon I was broken, betrayed, hurt and dying. Through your appeal to Jesus of Nazareth I was brought from death to life, and ever since I have known deep in my heart that I belonged to you. But I have belonged to Jesus also. I have had to seek him out and follow him and study him to know myself. And since I have looked into his eyes and heard his voice, I have come to know myself. And it is not a self that I am proud of. That I have said already. I say it again with a deep sense of shame. I, vain, misguided, elated by false ambition, scoffed at Jesus of Nazareth and set myself above him. Now I know him to be holy and I am not worthy to be even the least among his followers. Yes,

Thisoa, I am broken in spirit and all unworthy; but I am yours if you wish me to belong to you—yes, always and eternally yours.”

He ceased and with throbbing heart waited for an answer; but no answer came. He looked ardently at the woman whose very presence thrilled him, but no answering gaze met his own. Silent and with eyes steadily downcast Thisoa sat motionless and betrayed no sign of feeling. He had himself to break the silence which every moment smote his heart with a deeper pain.

“Thisoa,” he exclaimed at last humbly and sorrowfully, “has my pleading been all in vain? I can but feel that it has. Your silence tells me so. But let me hear it from your own lips. Do not be afraid of hurting me. I see I was wrong in offering you such a poor and broken life. You deserve something better, infinitely better. Do not hesitate to tell me that I erred. I will put away my grief, bless Jehovah, that He has let me know you, and hope that He will give you the happiness your noble generous heart deserves.”

But it was no unresponsive look that Thisoa then gave him. Claspings his hand and gazing unshrinkingly upon him while her eyes filled with tears, she said softly,

“Do you not know why I could not answer you at once?”

“No, Thisoa. Tell me why.”

“It was because my feeling was so deep. I did not know how to express it. And even now I do not know.”

“Do not try, Thisoa. I understand. Words could not tell me more.”

Thisoa heaved a long sigh of deep full satisfaction, again cast her eyes down, and with hands tightly clasped the two sat silent and contented for a while. It was Thisoa who first spoke again.

“No,” she said, “words are not really necessary, and yet there is much to say. Yes, very much to say. For I cannot have you think it is a poor and broken life you give me. It is

its very poverty—if it is right to use such a word—that makes it worthy in my eyes. You are not broken, Zatthu. You are humbled. Your pride has been broken. But from the wreck and ruin of a mistaken though a generous ambition, you have risen to be the truest and the noblest man in all the world.”

“No, no, Thisoa! You must not say that. You must not think it. Jesus of Nazareth is so holy, so high above me and above us all, that I bow before him and know myself to be but as the very dust.”

“It is because you so bow yourself that I love and honor you. Ah, how greatly I admired and honored you when you felt yourself to be your nation’s hope and were eager to make her free. But you failed. Through this very Jesus of Nazareth you failed, for he had won the people’s hearts and they were shut to you. And then, instead of burning with wrath against this holy august figure who had been the means of humbling you, you saw in him the light that you had fervently believed was to shine upon Judæa through you. And so you abased yourself and followed him.”

“How else could I have done? He healed me. He raised me from death to life.”

“*You* could not have done else, for you are Zatthu, my own Zatthu, in whose love I glory and whom I love with all my heart and will follow to the end of the world. No, you could do nothing else, for you are true, true, true. You were true to your cause, while you thought it was Jehovah’s. You are true now to Jesus of Nazareth and you will be true to him, whatever storms may break upon his head. It is such truth that wins a woman’s heart. You have won mine, Zatthu. It is all yours. It is always and eternally yours, even as you said that yours was mine.”

It was Zatthu now who was too deeply moved to speak. So silence again fell upon the two. The heart of each was full of an exquisite happiness that was too deep for words.

"Yes," said Zatthu after a while, "it was Jesus of Nazareth who defeated my ambition; it was he who healed me; it is he who now has my devotion — and he it is who has really given us to each other. Had he not come, I might now be leading my countrymen against the Roman legions, my thought wholly upon conquest, and far, far away from you. But Jesus came. He has made everything so different. He has brought us together; we owe our happiness to him; we must think of him even before ourselves."

"It is even so that I have been thinking of him, Zatthu. I have thought of him in that way ever since I looked into his eyes upon the mountain top and felt his hand upon my head."

"And he needs me even now. I am sure he needs me. Those storms you spoke of are about to break. I must go to Jerusalem and thwart his enemies. You would not have me stay?"

"No, Zatthu. You must go and stand at his side. Our happiness can wait."

VI

"I did not suppose I was acquiring a gardener and a son-in-law when you saved me from the robbers. If the hunchback had lived, no doubt I should have adopted him, for he was very apt at binding up a wound. Well, Jehovah's will be done. That is the way you look at it, and I acquiesce."

Such was Aristarchus' reply when Zatthu told him what had passed between Thisoa and himself and earnestly craved the sanction of the kindly Greek.

"But I hope you can do more than acquiesce. I hope you can approve with all your heart even though I am not of your land and blood."

"Hope! Hope! That is a strange word to come from the mouth of a countryman of Moses and Solomon. You lordly people think you are superior to all the dwellers on the earth. If your pride had not been shattered, you would have come to me in a condescending mood and informed me of the vast favor you were conferring upon me instead of hoping for my approval. But of course I approve. Are you not my guest-friend? Did you not save my life? There is not a man living to whom I would more gladly have seen my daughter give her heart. She has been the light of my home. Her mother and I shall miss her sorely. But we want her happiness above all things, and that you will make her happy I have not the shadow of a doubt."

"And your wife, you think, will share your own generous confidence?"

"I am sure of it. She is well trained. That spirited girl of mine has had her own way with both of us ever since she was old enough to call us Father and Mother. Wasn't that made plain to you when she hid you under the rose bushes?"

Zatthu smiled and admitted that Thisoa's will seemed always to make itself felt in the household. "But then," he

added slyly, "it is because it is such a wise will that it is heeded."

"To be sure. We discovered that before she was three years old and I am glad you have found it out. It will make life easier for you. But my wife shall speak for herself. I will conduct you to her."

Xenodice's approval was as hearty and unreserved as that of her husband, and the pang that the thought of the inevitable parting gave her was not revealed. Of course she was not surprised when Zatthu was brought before her; nor was she surprised when Thisoa gave her her full confidence immediately after the two lovers had revealed their hearts to each other. The mother had long since read her daughter's secret. She had read, but she had kept her own counsel; for Thisoa had never spoken of her deep emotion even though she realized that her mother understood. That the emotion would ever be gratified, Xenodice had gravely doubted; for the strange vicissitudes through which Zatthu had renounced his own ambition and become a humble believer in Jesus of Nazareth, she had not been able to foresee. Nor would she have seen a wholly admirable husband for her daughter in Zatthu, the proud Pharisee, Zatthu, the zealous champion of Hebrew ritual, Zatthu, the defiant leader of a puny nation against the invincible might of Rome. But this chastened man who had so deeply humbled himself had become exalted in her eyes. She had admired him when he had been the fiery enthusiast; she now viewed him with a warmer and a more profound regard.

"But must you really leave us now?" she asked when she had made Zatthu realize the warmth of her feeling for him. "You are making Thisoa so happy that I am sorry indeed to have you go."

"Yes, I must go. The future has long happy days for us. But Jesus calls me now."

"And he calls me too," said Aristarchus. "I shall go with

you to Jerusalem and take Shobek with me. Busy man that I am, I have thought first of my own concerns and have never sought this carpenter's son who has stirred all Judæa and brought upon himself the hatred of its bigoted priests. I know how bigoted they are. I believe he is in danger from them."

"But can you protect him?" inquired Zattu.

"No, and I have not thought of trying. It would be presumptuous in me to do so. I simply go to see him, for his end may be near. Marcus, not I, must give him protection."

"I have urged Marcus to do so, but he refuses. He says his power and influence do not extend so far. Nor is he ready to believe that the life of Jesus is really threatened."

"Marcus always thinks prudently and wisely. Very likely he is right. But, right or wrong, I believe he ought to be in Jerusalem and see what may take place. I will go now and invite him to accompany us."

Very soon Aristarchus brought back word that the centurion had readily consented to go with them: and the following morning they all set forth for Jerusalem.

VII

It was ten days before the Feast of the Passover that the four—for Shobek was one of the company as Aristarchus had said he should be—started for King David's city. Anxiety reigned straightway in the homes they left behind them.

It was the anxiety of apprehension, which is always hard to bear; and it was most keenly felt by Thisoa. That any disaster could befall Marcus or Aristarchus was not to be supposed; but Thisoa could not help wondering whether Zatthu might not be drawn into defending Jesus against armed assault and shedding his blood for him. That he would do this should the need arise, she did not for a moment doubt.

Would the need arise? Again and again she visited Naarah to consider with her this disturbing question. All the more frequently and eagerly she went because of the deeply affectionate greeting her new-found happiness was sure to call forth from this sympathizing friend. But Naarah was as powerless as Thisoa to pierce the future's veil.

"I am no prophetess," she said to her visitant one day. "My heart tells me that great things are even now happening at Jerusalem: but what they are, I know no more than you."

"But you are a Hebrew. You have lived from childhood in the Hebrew tradition. Does that say nothing to you?"

"I wish it did, dear Thisoa," answered Naarah, smiling faintly. "I can read your heart and I know what you want me to say. But really I have little idea whether the followers of Jesus will take up arms and whether Zatthu will be one of them."

"What do you think, Naarah?"

"What do you yourself think, bearing in mind all that Mary told us about her son?"

"That around him there could never be the awfulness of battle, men killing each other in mad rage, the earth reddened with their blood, the air filled with shouts of agony and hate — yes, that is what I think."

"And that is what I think too, Thisoa."

"But what, then, will save Jesus from his enemies?"

"Jehovah, who saved Moses and Elisha and Daniel long ago."

"By sword and flame? By flood? By an angel of Death?"

"I do not know. But before the mountains were brought forth; before He had formed the earth and the world; even from everlasting to everlasting He is God."

"And Jesus was sent by Him; so Jesus must be under his protection. Yes, it would seem as if that must be our hope, our only hope."

But the hope was not sure enough to quiet Thisoa's dread. To her friend Naomi she therefore went one day to see if she could gain help from the child's trusting spirit. And trusting indeed she found it. Naomi was still a child in the simplicity of her faith.

"But who could wish to hurt Jesus?" she asked when Thisoa told her the fears that preyed upon her heart. "He is so kind he would make his enemies love him."

"Was not David kind to King Saul? And yet Saul tried to kill him."

"But it was not Saul that wanted to do that. It was an evil spirit that was in him."

"I am afraid a great many men have evil spirits in them that make them do wicked things."

"But Jesus can cast all the evil spirits out. Isn't that one of the things he came to do?"

"I believe it is, dear Naomi. Perhaps he will do it. But I fear it will take a great deal longer than you think."

It was in a wondering mood that Thisoa went away from her little friend. Had she learned another lesson from this

child's unquestioning trust? Had Naomi better than her elders divined why Jesus had come into the world? A healer of the body, was he even more a healer of the soul? More and more as the years passed would he drive evil out of the hearts of men? A mighty question. Only Jehovah, she thought, could surely answer it. Only Jehovah, for Thisoa had come to believe as devoutly as Zatthu and Naarah and Marcus in the God of Israel.

Sooner than she had dared to hope word came back from Jerusalem, and it was her father that brought it. The day before the Passover he unexpectedly appeared. Thisoa flew to meet him as soon as she learned he was in the house, and asked eagerly,

"What news do you bring, dear father? Is it good or bad?"

Aristarchus looked at her with a quizzical smile as he replied,

"I left Zatthu safe and well. So far the news is good. As to the rest, let us go to your mother and then I will tell my story."

But Aristarchus was slow to begin when the three were seated together and Thisoa had to draw him out by a question.

"Have you any news that is *not* good, father dear? You said Zatthu was safe and well. What of Jesus?"

"What of Jesus? That is a question I find it hard to answer. It is a question all the people in this Hebrew land are asking now and they are answering it in many, many ways. I can say that no ill had come to him when I left Jerusalem; but beyond that I can make no answer that could give you any deep and full satisfaction. What I have seen and heard has impressed me deeply; but I am not a man of words. So I will tell my story in plain and simple speech and you must make of it what you can.

"On our way to Jerusalem we fell in with a few country-

men of mine and from that time on I kept company with them. Shobek was with me, but I let Marcus and Zatthu go their own ways.

“These Greeks, some of whom I already knew, were, like Marcus, of the Hebrew faith and they were journeying to Jerusalem to worship at the Passover. But that was not their only purpose. Like me they were anxious to see Jesus.

“Reaching Jerusalem the sixth day before the Passover we found he was at Bethany near by. It was there that he was said to have given life to his friend Lazarus after he had lain in the sepulchre four days. This was done only a short time since and the crowds were flocking to Bethany, quite as much to see this man who had been raised from the dead as to get sight of Jesus himself. Indeed, so many were coming to believe in Jesus because of this astonishing thing he was said to have done, that the priests, so we were told, were tempted to put Lazarus to death that he might not be a living witness to Jesus’ miraculous power.

“To Bethany we did not go. My countrymen and I agreed that to be the object of so many curious eyes might not be altogether pleasant to Lazarus. Our one object was to see Jesus himself and we were sure that he would soon appear in Jerusalem. But we fell in with a man who went to Bethany and he told us of a supper that was served in the house of Lazarus to Jesus and other guests. To this house Jesus has often resorted for rest and quiet, and Lazarus’ two sisters, Martha and Mary, have ministered to him. At this supper they were, as might be expected, present and Martha looked to the needs of those who ate and drank. But Mary showed the depth of her affection, of her devotion I might say, by kneeling at Jesus’ feet while he sat at the table, anointing them with a very costly ointment that filled the room with its fragrance, and wiping them with her hair. A waste, protested one of Jesus’ disciples, for this ointment should have been sold and the money given to the poor. ‘Let her alone,’

was Jesus' answer, 'against the day of my burial hath she done this.'

"The next day Jesus came to Jerusalem. As soon as this was known, crowds of those who believed in him seized palm branches and went to meet him, crying: 'Hosanna! Blessed is the King of Israel that cometh in the name of Jehovah.'

"It was thus that he entered the city, like a king with adoring subjects all around him though he was mounted on an ass's colt. Little chance there seemed for myself and my fellow Greeks to get near him: but one of our number knew Philip of Bethsaida who is of the twelve immediate and devoted followers of Jesus. When we said to him that we would see Jesus, he made known our wish to Jesus himself. The crowd was parted and we stood in the presence of the man whom it was the one deep desire of our hearts to see.

"Just for an instant he gazed at us and in that instant I felt that he read our minds. We had come to measure him. He knew it and the words that he spoke were an answer to the request he saw written on our hearts. Wonderful words they were, but I could not repeat them. Even if I could remember them they would be meaningless coming from my mouth. In them the man revealed himself, the greatness of his spirit, the travail of his soul, the consciousness of his own power to lead men and uplift them. He ended by raising his eyes upward and crying: 'Father, glorify Thy name.'

"And this prayer was on the instant answered, for from above there came a voice. Thunder, some called it; but it was a voice, a voice that thrilled me though I could not understand the words it uttered. But Jesus understood them and was exalted by them; for he at once burst into a still loftier and sublimer strain. It was a strain of prophecy, a strain of triumph, and yet of sadness too. He seemed to be bidding farewell to the world, and yet he did not speak like a man who was defeated and had lost his hope. Rather did he have a sure

sense that the end for which he had been living, whatever that may be, was now accomplished.

"As soon as he had finished speaking he went away, and I did not see him again. The next day I started homeward, so I have no more to tell."

"But why did you come away?" said Thisoa. "Why did you not wish to stay and see what was to happen? Jesus is surrounded by enemies, as every one knows, and you say he seemed to be bidding farewell to the world."

"It was because I thought his end was near that I did not wish to stay. If the priestly party has its way, he will suffer a cruel death—one that I shudder to think of. So I left Shobek to bring further news. I had seen what I went to see. It was enough."

"You said you could not answer our question, What of Jesus?" said Xenodice, "yet I feel that you have answered it in your own mind. If you had not done so, would you have come away so soon? So you must tell us what you really think, my husband. Do you believe that Jesus is Messiah?"

"As to that, it is hard for me to believe or disbelieve. But as I saw and heard him, I felt that his was the purest and loftiest soul this earth has ever seen."

"Then why do his own people hate him so?" asked Thisoa.

"In part because he claims so much."

"Yet you do not on that account condemn him?"

"Far from it, strange as it may seem; for pretense has always angered me. But when I heard Jesus put himself above all other men I had a strange but deep conviction that what he said was true."

"Can you recall none of his words?" inquired Xenodice.

"Just one saying fixed itself in my mind: 'If I be lifted up I will draw all men unto me.'"

"What did he mean by that?"

"More perhaps than will be known till many, many days have passed. But as I have thought about it, I have felt that

he was speaking of his soul. Far above all other men in holiness of life, he will by his example make them better."

"Yes, his example might do that," said Thisoa, "even if they put him to death. But should they do so, how could he be Messiah?"

"What is a Messiah supposed to do?"

"They think his task is to bring back the nation's glory."

"Perhaps they are wrong. Perhaps his work is to purify their spirits and destroy their overweening pride."

"How perplexing it all is! What a strange and wonderful character he is and what amazing things he does! Do you believe he gave life to Lazarus after he had been in the tomb four days?"

"Does it seem incredible to you?"

"Oh, no! I could believe anything of the man whose face I looked into on the mountain top."

"I, too, though not by nature credulous, could believe almost anything of the power which cured Hacho, snatched Zatthu from the very arms of death and brought back Naomi to life. There must be some limit to what Jesus can do, but I know not where it lies."

"How strange that we who are Greeks should borrow our faith from this alien people!" reflected Thisoa.

"Not so strange," resumed Aristarchus. "Those who are initiated into the Eleusinian mysteries undoubtedly have glimpses of truth that is pure, beautiful and uplifting. But from the worship of the gods of my country I turned long ago. They do not seem real. They do not inspire in me any feeling of reverence or devotion. I was thrilled sometimes by Phidias' great statue of Athene in the Parthenon; still more was I awed the one time I looked up at his wondrous image of Zeus at Olympia. But the feeling was a passing one, and was called forth solely by the genius of the sculptor. Gold and ivory do not make a god."

"Great and noble men seemed to be raised up by our Greek

religion," said Xenodice. "There was Socrates, perhaps the grandest of them all."

"Yes, Greece has had great men to make her deeds great, her writings great, her philosophy great, though how far her religion made them what they were it would be hard to say. Of these there is none nobler than Socrates. Yet Jesus is a higher and a holier figure than he."

"What makes you feel so, father?" inquired Thisoa.

"Partly the very claims of Jesus, because when I heard him make them they seemed to me true, as I have already told you. Had Socrates made such he would have appeared ridiculous. And that scene when the sister of Lazarus anointed the feet of Jesus and wiped them with her hair kept coming to my mind as I journeyed back from Jerusalem. I could not help contrasting it with the scene between Socrates and his wife on his last day in prison. She had come with her children, his children they were, to say farewell. But his words to her were hard and unfeeling. I see in Jesus a kindlier, a tenderer and a holier nature than our great countryman possessed.

"But you must think it strange that I should talk in this way—I who have all my life been silent about these great questions of religion and immortality. The truth is, I have been silent because I could not see the truth. I have always been seeking it. Often have I wandered at night and looked up at the stars to learn what they could tell me. But only now have the questions of my soul been answered. Jehovah who has so strangely made himself known to Israel is the one true God, and Jesus—I can only say I believe this carpenter's son is nearer to Jehovah than any other man who has ever lived."

"Yet this," said Xenodice, "is the man whom his own countrymen wish to kill. Oh, I almost wish you had stayed longer in Jerusalem, so that you might bring us word of the things that perhaps even now are happening."

“Shobek will come ere long and tell us,” replied Aristarchus.

“Yes, but what will he have to tell?” queried Thisoa. “Oh, I cannot believe Jehovah will let this holy man be cruelly sacrificed. But may Shobek come soon. May he come soon.”

VIII

Ten days passed before Shobek came — days which found Aristarchus busy and tranquil but which passed slowly and painfully to Xenodice and Thisoa. No matter to what household activity they turned, their thought was always dwelling anxiously and wonderingly on what might be happening at Jerusalem.

It was at noon on the eleventh day that Shobek arrived. He went straight to Aristarchus, whom he found in the room which he used as an office, said wearily, "It is all over," and sank into a chair.

"You mean that they have killed him?"

"Yes; crucified him."

"When did it happen?"

"Day before yesterday."

"You lost no time in coming to let us know of it."

"No, I knew you would be anxious to hear. I started yesterday at noon, traveled far into the night, and easily made the rest of the journey this morning."

"You are tired. Go and eat and drink, and then we will hear your story."

"I am sad at heart, but I am not tired and I have no desire for food. I am ready now to tell you all I have seen."

"Then I will bring my wife and daughter here and we will hear what you have to say."

Xenodice and Thisoa came eagerly and Shobek was bidden to begin.

"My story is not a long one," he said. "I could not make it long; for it is a terrible thing I have to tell you of, and you would not want me to dwell upon pain and agony."

"The priests, as you know, were determined to put Jesus to death. One of his own disciples, Judas by name, betrayed him to them the very night before the Passover. A body of armed men arrested him and early in the morning he was

taken before Pilate. Now Pilate has a strain of kindness and mercy in him, as Zatthu and I can bear witness. He did not want to condemn Jesus to death and he sent him to Herod, claiming that it belonged to Herod rather than to himself to judge him because Jesus was a Galilean. But Herod only mocked him, arrayed him in a gorgeous robe and sent him back to Pilate.

"So Pilate had to give judgment, loath as he was to do so. He pronounced Jesus innocent and proposed to release him because it was a custom of the Jews that an accused person should be released at the Passover. 'No, no,' cried the Jews. 'Crucify Jesus and release'—now who do you suppose it was they wished released? (And here Shobek looked searchingly at Aristarchus.) It was no other than that robber Barabbas, who nearly brought about your death and with whom Zatthu and I found shelter when Rome pressed us hard. Think of it! Jesus, who has healed men, sent to the cross! Barabbas, who has robbed and killed men, set at liberty!

"But so it was. Pilate did not dare to resist the priests and their party, for they told him that Jesus had declared himself a king and this was treason to Cæsar. So Pilate had him scourged and crucified.

"I saw him led to the hill of Golgotha where the dreadful thing was done. He was made to carry his own cross and he fainted it was so heavy. So a man from Cyrene in Africa, Simon by name, was forced to bear it."

"Why did you not carry it yourself, Shobek!" inquired Aristarchus. "To you it would have been no burden."

"Gladly would I have done so; but the sight of Jesus, deserted now by nearly every one, mocked and jeered at and soon to be cruelly tortured, had almost overpowered me. So I had dropped behind that my eyes might not rest upon this dreadful sight of suffering and hatred, and the burden of the cross was placed on Simon before I really knew what had been done.

“Nor near the spot where he was crucified was I able to linger long. I saw the crosses raised—it was about the third hour—and there were three of them; for Jesus met this death of agony and shame between two evil-doers. They were marked only by their crimes; but over Jesus was placed this inscription by the command of Pilate: This is the King of the Jews.

“But a few days before crowds had flocked to meet him with palm branches and hailed him with hosannas. Now he was almost friendless. A group of women stood and watched at a little distance. At the foot of the cross stood his mother with two other women and one of his disciples, John by name, whom it was said he greatly loved.”

“John!” exclaimed Thisoa. “Why, he was the one who was kind to me on the mountain and showed me how I could find Jesus. Oh, what a kind, sweet face he had! I should have known he would be true. But Peter was so eager to protect his master that he was harsh and would have me go away.”

“And Peter was the one who failed his master when the hour of trial came. Of that I shall speak before I finish my story. It was John and the three women who stood faithfully at the cross, watched the long agony that they felt cruelly, and waited for the end to come. That Jesus drew some little comfort from their presence and their unfailing affection, I could not but believe. But I did not know him; I could do nothing for him; and it tried me so to see him suffer that I went away and wandered through the city.

“Restlessly and ceaselessly I wandered, for my heart was heavy. And after a time a strange thing happened. About the sixth hour it grew dark, and until the ninth hour the sun was hid and the whole city plunged in night. At the ninth hour came an earthquake that made everything tremble, and the light of day came slowly back. Feeling that the end had come, I went back to the hill of the crucifixion, and I found

that it was even so. Jesus had expired when the earthquake came. They had taken him down from the cross, and in the evening one Joseph of Arimathæa, first getting Pilate's permission, laid the body in his own new tomb.

"Such was the end of Jesus. Regarding him, I have nothing more to tell. But I must recount to you what passed between me and a man I met when I started to roam about the city. For that man was Barabbas. It was very near the scene of the crucifixion that I fell in with him. He seemed to have been drawn there irresistibly, as if compelled to witness the suffering he had so narrowly escaped.

"*'Barabbas,'* I said, *'you ought to be hanging there upon the cross instead of that holy man. He has done nothing but good in the world and you have done nothing but evil.'*

"He recognized me, shrugged his shoulders and replied: *'They set me free. I should have been a fool not to have made the most of it.'*

"*'At any rate you know you deserve the cross,'* I said. *'What evil thing did you do last?'*

"*'They called it insurrection. One of our band had been captured and taken to Jerusalem. With several of my men I went into the city and raised a street brawl to effect a rescue. In the fray I killed a man, and though my comrades got away, I was seized and put in prison.'*

"I looked hard at him and said: *'One more murder. How many altogether have you committed?'*

"*'Many. But my deeds are not all evil. You know that.'*

"*'Yes,'* I said, *'I know that. You sheltered Zatthu and myself when the Romans almost had their hands upon us. And I have never believed you played the traitor. Were you in the plot to hand us over to the Romans?'*

"*'No. My hands are clear of that business. I so hate the Romans that I admired your friend because he had made them his enemies.'*

"*'You are not all bad, Barabbas. You ought not to go*

back to the life you have led and do all the evil things to which it forces you.'

"What else could I do?"

"Tend sheep. Work in a vineyard. Plough and sow and reap. Perform any useful labor. Look at that innocent suffering man upon the cross! By his death you have won your life. Use it for better things than robbing and murdering.'

"The sullen defiant look he had always worn seemed to pass as I said this. 'Perhaps I will. Perhaps I will,' he murmured, and walked away."

"What a strange interview!" said Aristarchus. "What a strange ending to an intercourse that began in a bloody fray, was continued in a den of thieves and terminated near the very cross on which this man who had both fought you and sheltered you should have paid for his misdeeds with his life! I suppose Zatthu would see the hand of Jehovah in it. Well, he may be right. But go on with your story. What else happened before you left Jerusalem?"

"Nothing of moment. I was lodging, you know, with a brother of my father's, a fisherman who had long known Peter, the disciple of Jesus. The next morning he went with me to Peter, for he knew where to find him; and Peter showed himself a very penitent and utterly disheartened man. When Jesus was arrested and taken to the palace of the high priest, Peter went in too, to see what would take place. He had now lost all heart and courage, and when he was accused of being one of Jesus' followers he denied that it was so. Hardly had he done this before the very thing happened which Jesus, it seems, had prophesied. A cock crew, and Peter, remembering the prophecy, wept bitter tears of repentance.

"He was still lamenting his cowardice when we found him, and with the death of Jesus all his hopes had perished. As soon as he saw my uncle, he burst into a flood of tears, told how recreant he had been, how sorry he was, and how hard it was to go back to the old life after having felt so sure that a

new and glorious day was dawning for Israel. But there was nothing else left for him to do, and the very sight of my uncle made him think of his old craft. The two began to talk of going a-fishing.

"So I bade them goodbye, and started for Capernaum. If Jesus' own follower felt that all was over, I could take no other view. I had but one duty now, to come back and tell you what I had seen: and as fast as I could, I made the journey hither."

"Perhaps," said Thisoa, "you might have been more hopeful if you had seen and talked with John instead of Peter. And yet what hope could there be? It is all so strange and so very, very sad!"

"Did Jesus' followers offer no resistance when he was arrested?" inquired Aristarchus.

"Peter did. It would seem that he had prepared himself to defend his master by force; for he drew a sword which he was carrying, and wounded one of the high priest's servants. But Jesus forbade further resistance. So his followers could but stand peacefully by and see him led away."

"What of Zatthu and Marcus?" inquired Xenodice. "When did you see them last?"

"I have seen very little of them. Zatthu of course has been living in his own home and we did not meet often. I saw him last at the crucifixion; but I was not near him and did not try to speak to him. When I have run across him he has not cared to talk freely with me. Not that there has been any cloud upon our old intimacy. It is simply that his one thought has been of Jesus. All of Jesus' movements he has followed closely, and I know that he has been working and planning day and night to save him from his enemies. But it was all in vain. It makes me sad to think of his grief and disappointment.

"Of Marcus I have seen almost nothing. He has been much

with Pilate, and that is all I know. I think he lodged at the centurion's quarters on Mount Zion."

"You did well to come when you did, Shobek," said Aristarchus. "You have brought terrible tidings, but they were not unexpected, and we were all anxious to know the truth. Marcus and Zatthu will in due time tell us if there is still any hope."

"But how could there be any hope?" said Xenodice. "It would seem as if a man who performed such miracles as Jesus did must have had Jehovah on his side and could have confounded and destroyed his enemies as the leaders of Israel did of old. But he let himself be led to his death. The time for his rise to greatness and for Israel's deliverance has plainly passed."

"So it would seem," said Aristarchus very slowly and deliberately. "So it would seem. But I cannot get out of my mind that voice which answered Jesus when he said: 'Father, glorify Thy name.' Was it Jehovah's voice he heard? He was sure that it was; that was manifest. And if he was obeying Jehovah when he let himself be arrested and put to death, it was for some great end."

"I have believed in Jesus," said Xenodice, "ever since Thisoa saw him on the mountain and Zatthu told us of his cure. Yet his death makes me wonder; and that voice almost sounds to me like a trick."

"Had you seen the light on the face of Jesus," replied Aristarchus, "you could have had no such thought. No man that looked as he did then ever played the deceiver."

"And the man into whose face I looked," said Thisoa, "was as much above trickery or falsehood as the heavens are above the earth. I too cannot help having a grain of hope. But how we shall long for Marcus or Zatthu to appear!"

IX

It was on the Sabbath that Shobek arrived to tell his story. Not till the second Sabbath after that had come round did they get further news; and this time the news was brought by Marcus.

He came with Naarah and on the face of neither was there the look of sadness and dejection that Shobek had worn on his return.

"You have something good to tell us, Marcus," cried Thisoa. "I can read it in your face. And you have the same glad expression, Naarah. Do tell us what has happened!"

"Yes, I have something strange and wonderful to tell," said Marcus. "Of course I recounted everything to Naarah first; but the moment I had done so we made our way hither. I learned from Naarah the tidings that Shobek brought and I knew how anxious you would be to hear what had happened since. So now that we are all together, I will make known to you the great news. Jesus rose from the tomb on the third day, as he had prophesied he would."

"Then he did not die?" was Thisoa's query.

"Yes. It was the truth that Shobek announced to you. He expired upon the cross. He expired sooner than men usually do when they are submitted to that lingering agony. With a great cry he died, and the evening of that same day he was laid in the tomb. But when women went to anoint him with spices on the morning of the third day, the tomb was empty."

"How could they be sure the body was not stolen by his enemies?"

"Because an angel told them otherwise. Because he appeared himself to Mary Magdalene—a woman to whom he had been gracious and who worshipped him almost as if he were Jehovah—and then to his own disciples."

"But what does it mean?" said Xenodice. "Why did he let himself be put to death if he has such power?"

"I do not know. I do not yet understand. I do not believe his own disciples understand. But I feel sure it was to carry out some great and wondrous purpose of Jehovah."

"Have his disciples again gathered about him?" asked Aristarchus. "Is he rousing in them their former hopes?"

"By no means. He is not the same that he was before. He seems almost like a spirit. Only for a short time does he show himself to his disciples, and then suddenly when they are not expecting him. And sometimes they do not even recognize him till he fully reveals himself to them."

"Have you seen him, yourself?"

"No. All this I have learned from Zatthu who has for some time been on friendly and familiar terms with some of the disciples. From them he heard all that I have told you, and more than once he has sought me out to give me news that I could bring to you."

"You say you doubt if Jesus' own disciples understand why he has suffered death and risen from the tomb. What makes you think that? You have no acquaintance with them, have you?"

"None at all. I only judge from the things which Zatthu tells me. He says they seem bewildered and unable to form any plan of action. They had, you see, one fixed idea up to the time when Jesus was arrested and condemned—that he was to be head of a mighty kingdom and they were to be his chief ministers. That hope is forever gone. Jesus as a spirit who appears to them suddenly and disappears does not revive it. It is a joy to them to see him, but it does not seem the way to any end."

"Do you see how it is the way to any end?"

All these searching questions were put by Aristarchus. Deliberately and with carefully chosen words Marcus had

answered them. But to this last query he made no reply at once. Finally he said,

“It would be presumptuous in me to think that I can see where Jesus’ own followers are groping blindly. But surely Jesus came into this world for some great purpose; and plainly it was not the purpose his disciples had shaped in their own minds. He was not sent by Jehovah to free Israel from Rome or to establish a great kingdom. He was not sent merely to heal many of disease; for that work of mercy is all ended and who is to carry it on? He is still seen, but only rarely and only for a short space of time. He really does not seem to belong to this world any longer. It cannot be that he has vanquished death and walked among men once more in order to do any of the great things a man may accomplish before he is laid in the tomb.

“It would seem to me then that he must have come into the world to make men better; and he is to do this by making them know Jehovah better. Has the spirit of the great Jehovah been in these Jews whose worship is a mere blind observance of their ritual and lets them hate and cruelly kill one who was vastly purer and holier than they? I cannot think so. It is not the restoration to their ancient glory that these Hebrews need; rather is it a chastened, a humbler and a more merciful spirit.

“That is the only lesson I can read from this unparalleled life of purity, of holiness and of limitless compassion. But what do you think, Aristarchus? I, though a Roman, have embraced the Hebrew faith. You have not. What does your Greek mind with its keen powers of discernment, its native love of justice, and its long and close study of men and things, say to you of this wonderful life, its sudden and unexpected end and its startling reappearance in the world after it had been claimed by death?”

“I can do little more than echo your opinion, Marcus. And perhaps that will not seem strange to you when I tell

you, what my family already know, that I too have bowed to Jehovah. I was really ready to do this before I saw Jesus. After I had seen him I did it with no reservations in my mind. Jesus, I felt, had the spirit of Jehovah in him as no other man has ever had it. It was to manifest this spirit that he came. When he had done this his purpose was accomplished and so he let himself be put to death. Now that he has come back from the tomb, I can only think it is to make his work still more complete — though how I do not see. How indeed could any of us see? It is a strange, strange story, full of mystery. How do you read it, Naarah?"

"My mind," said Naarah, "goes back to the day when Thisoa and I visited my grandfather and to the vision he had when we asked him about Jesus. His mind seemed then to be opened like that of the prophets of old. In Jesus he saw the Messiah that is promised in our Scriptures, and the words that tell of his coming and his nature rushed in a torrent from his lips. And those words spoke of a great darkness and a great light. Did not the darkness come when Jesus was expiring on the cross and night fell on Jerusalem? And did not the great light dawn when Jesus conquered death and rose from the tomb? How the light is to grow and illumine all my people, I do not know. But I have a strange deep feeling that the light has come."

"You have told us what your deepest thought is about Jesus," said Xenodice. "Will you not now relate what really happened under your own eyes during those days in which you tarried in Jerusalem? You must have seen and heard things about which we would gladly know."

"Question me then," said Marcus. "You have heard Shobek's story. I would not repeat it."

"Pray tell us then," said Thisoa, "how Pilate could find it in him to send Jesus to a cruel death. Shobek thought it was through actual fear of the high priest and his party. Was that really so?"

"You have probably asked me the one thing about which I could tell you more than Shobek. Yes, Pilate was overawed by the rabid hatred and the fierce insistence of the priestly party. I know, for I was standing near him when Jesus was brought into his presence."

"I have wondered," said Aristarchus, "if you were not with Pilate when he had to pass judgment upon Jesus. What a great and yet terrible scene you witnessed — the innocent condemned by the unrighteous. Tell me, did Rome ever do a baser thing?"

"Your shaft is well aimed, Aristarchus, and it hits. Rome's rule is essentially a just one; but she sometimes exalts men who bring her into contempt — and this judgment passed by Pilate upon Jesus is the most shameful and unrighteous deed that a servant of hers has ever done."

"You think Pilate did it unwillingly?"

"Most unwillingly."

"Did he give Jesus no chance to defend himself?"

"He gave him every chance: but Jesus would not defend himself. He read the man who questioned him."

"He did question him?"

"Yes, and seriously. I shall never indeed forget that questioning. Pilate is a man who thinks. In the man before him he saw nobility and greatness of soul. Gladly would he have drawn him into a discussion and got from him words of weight to ponder over. When Jesus said that his kingdom was not of this world, Pilate asked him if he was a king. Jesus did not deny it, but said that he came to bear witness unto the truth. 'What is truth?' demanded Pilate. But Jesus made no answer. He knew how useless it was. But Pilate had been so impressed by his lofty words and the sublime calmness of his spirit that he told the Jews he found him blameless and that he wished to release him. But this decision raised such a storm of protest that he released Barabbas

instead, had Jesus scourged and then delivered to his enemies to be crucified."

"Could not you have saved him?" demanded Thisoa.

"I do not think so."

"Did you try?"

"No."

"How could you help it when you saw that holy innocent man standing friendless before you?"

"He was not friendless. A mighty friend was with him then and there."

"Who, pray?"

"Jehovah."

"How do you know? What do you mean?" asked Thisoa, awed by the solemnity of Marcus' manner.

"I mean exactly what I say. All the great things Jesus has done, all the miracles of healing he has wrought, he has done because Jehovah was working through him as He worked through Moses and other leaders in the ancient days. And that He has been with Jesus up to the very moment when he expired upon the cross, I have no doubt. For when Jesus was arrested his followers would have defended him; but Jesus forbade them to use their swords and said his Father would send legions of angels to protect him if he prayed for them. And by his Father whom but Jehovah could he mean?"

"How did you learn that he said that?" questioned Thisoa.

"From Zathu. He was with Jesus when he was arrested and he heard him say it."

"Was he present when Pilate questioned Jesus?"

"Yes. And as I learned from him afterward, he felt as I did, that Jesus could have used Jehovah's power to confound all his enemies had he so chosen. He let himself be led to a death of suffering because he knew it was Jehovah's will."

"And so you felt you could do naught to save him?"

"Yes. Strange as it may seem, I felt exactly that."

"You were not even moved to try and secure for him a quicker and less painful death?"

"No, not even that."

"Could you have done so?"

"I hardly think it. Pilate was thoroughly cowed by the Jews. He said it was innocent blood that was shed and he publicly washed his hands to show that he was guiltless of it. But he did not dare to stand against the wrath and fury of Jesus' enemies."

"He was a coward!" cried Thisoa with passion.

"Before you who are my friends I do not deny it, though he is my superior whose mandates I must obey."

"I suppose," said Thisoa reflectively, "you must be right. I suppose it was all done in accordance with Jehovah's will. But oh, the shame and horror of it! That man, who looked on me with eyes more tender than any mother's, hated and maltreated and surrendered to cruel vindictive enemies by the very man whose duty it was to save him! Oh, the Roman purple is disgraced forever. Socrates' judges were brave and virtuous men compared with Pilate."

"I cannot rebuke your indignation," said Marcus. "It is wholly justified."

"Did you not feel it yourself when you saw that Pilate was going to let the Jews have their way?"

"To some extent. But so deep was my conviction that Jesus was letting some deep mysterious purpose be carried out that my mind was filled with wonder more than indignation. Ever my eyes were fixed on Jesus. In the very lowliness with which he bore himself there was a majesty that made me feel like kneeling before him there and asking him to let me serve him."

"You could feel like that," Thisoa exclaimed, "and right at your side were the men whom the sight and the words of Jesus filled with venomous hate and the longing to torture and slay him! What a strange thing is this human heart!"

Sophocles and Euripides were right when they made it the seat of every kind of passion, evil and good. And women as well as men can be wicked. One has only to think of Clytemnestra and Medea."

"Or of Jezebel; if you want a real person and not one imagined by the poets," was Naarah's comment.

"At any rate, I am glad no woman had anything to do with the death of Jesus."

"One woman tried to save him, but in vain," said Marcus.

"How glad I am to hear it!" exclaimed Thisoa. "It is the only gleam of light that relieves this dark, dark story. But who, pray, was she?"

"Pilate's wife."

"Did he tell you that?"

"Yes. I saw him the day after Jesus was crucified. Conscious that he had played a sorry part he tried to justify himself in my eyes. He told me that his wife had sent him word not to condemn Jesus because of a dream she had had, and how desirous he had really been to obey the warning. But as the Jews made it appear that Jesus was guilty of treason, he had to give way to them out of respect to Rome. I did not rebuke him, for he is clad with authority; but he realized how weak and pitiful I felt his plea to be."

"When did you see Zatthu last?" inquired Aristarchus.

"The day before I came away."

"What is he doing and when will he return?"

"He is simply watching and waiting. Something momentous, so he thinks, may happen any day and any hour. His whole mind is upon these mighty happenings. He may not appear for many days yet, but when he comes he is likely to bring wondrous tidings."

"More days of waiting and suspense, it seems," said Aristarchus. "And waiting for what? That is the strange thing about it. When Shobek brought word that Jesus had been put to death, I felt that that was not the end. I looked for

something further, something surprising, something that had never happened before — and you have brought the astonishing story of Jesus' emergence from the tomb. And now again we look for something further, but are as ignorant as ever of what that further thing can be. But again I am sure it will fill our souls with wonder. Well, we must all be patient till *Zatthu* comes."

X

Yet they found it hard to be patient, for day after day passed by and still Zatthu neither appeared nor sent any message. At last, after four more Sabbaths had elapsed, he came.

When he had greeted Aristarchus he sought Thisoa and joyous was their meeting. Thisoa's feeling was too deep to suffer the restraints of a timid soul which does not find in the very sanctity of its own emotion its sufficient safeguard. Her gladness was so freely manifested that Zatthu was thrilled and awed by it, and he showed how the love he had so long repressed now flooded and exalted his whole being.

But not for long did the lovers remain by themselves.

"You have tidings, wondrous tidings to make known to us," said Thisoa. "I can read it in your countenance. Glad tidings, I am sure they are, for you come back bearing yourself like one who has to tell of a battle won. So let us go to my father and mother who are as eager as I am to hear your story."

"Yes. It is glad tidings that I bring; but let Marcus and Naarah be summoned--yes, and Shobek too must hear what I have to say. When we are all gathered together, I will speak. It is a strange, a solemn and unheard-of thing I have to relate. I would not go round repeating it like a tale bearer."

Marcus and Naarah came quickly and eagerly in response to the summons sent them; and Shobek was only too anxious to listen once more to the man he had served so devotedly and long. When all were assembled Zatthu said,

"Wondrous, wondrous indeed is the news I bring you. Jesus will be seen by human eyes no more. The mighty Jehovah who sent him has taken him unto Himself. Even while we were all gazing upon him he rose from earth; a cloud received him and veiled him from our sight."

So solemnly did Zatthu say this that his listeners were awed and for a short time, sat in silence. Finally Marcus asked,

“Who saw this wondrous sight?”

“The company of followers whom he had chosen and who had assembled at his bidding.”

“Was it near Jerusalem that they had gathered?”

“Yes, close by Jerusalem.”

“And did he lay any last commands upon them?”

“Yes. Unable to rid themselves of the view they had so fondly cherished, they asked him if he was to restore Israel to its kingly state. His answer made them feel it was not for them to know what was willed by Jehovah; but that power from on high would be given them and they were to bear witness to him not only through this Hebrew land but to the furthest parts of the earth.”

“You say they were to bear witness. Does ‘they’ mean you, Zatthu?” inquired Aristarchus.

“Yes,” replied Zatthu, slowly but unhesitatingly. “I was one of them. The command was laid on me.”

“You are one of those whom Jesus chose?” asked Thisoa earnestly.

“Not as he chose the Twelve and as he sent forth the seventy apostles. But I have mingled with the Twelve and talked freely with them. With some of the seventy apostles I have had close intercourse. I once looked into the eyes of Jesus; I saw that he read my soul and knew my story; from that hour I have felt that I belonged wholly to him. When he was betrayed by Judas, I was near him, sword in hand, to repel his enemies had he so willed. But he did not will it, and I could but stand helpless and see him tried, condemned and put to a cruel death.”

“I have told all here,” said Marcus, “how we both felt powerless to help Jesus because he seemed to be bowing to Jehovah’s will. I have told them, too, in answer to their own

earnest questioning, that Jesus seemed to me to have come into the world to take away its evil; for even though he rose from the tomb, he no longer belonged to this world and he could not have made himself King of Israel. Do not Jesus' last injunctions to his followers confirm this view? What is the witness you will bear to him unless it be just this?"

"I believe you to be wholly right, Marcus," answered Zathu. "Jesus came into the world to purify it, not to make himself a king. It was exactly this, I have been reminded by some of the Twelve, that John the Baptist said of him; for, seeing him, he uttered this strange saying: Behold the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world. That same John the Baptist we Pharisees despised, and I was one of his chief contemners. But he saw the light while we were in darkness."

"Yet it was not strange that you thought John the Baptist an impostor and his words mere folly," said Naarah. "Our nation looked for a great deliverer, like Moses; and how could it be freed from Rome's heavy hand by one so mild and gentle that he could be spoken of as the Lamb of God?"

"Perhaps it was not strange," said Zathu, "though I am loath to make any excuses for my blindness. But ah, how often do we turn from the truth because it seems to us strange! Those prophecies that tell of the Messiah to come—how strange they are, how hard to understand! But since I was reminded that John the Baptist called Jesus the Lamb of God, I have found one of Isaiah's prophetic utterances coming home to me again and again with startling power. For in a sublime but sorrowful strain which seems clearly to be spoken of the Messiah he uses these words which our learned men could never fathom: He is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth. Verily it was as a lamb that Jesus was led to the cross; and when he was questioned, accused and

vilified before the high priests and before Pilate, he opened not his mouth."

So solemn was Zatthu's manner and so manifestly deep and fervent was the feeling out of which he spoke, that a hush fell upon the little group that was listening to him. It was Thisoa who broke the silence.

"I too am ashamed of my blindness," she said very gently. "I shall try to make amends for it all my days; and whatever you do, wherever you go, Zatthu, in obeying the last commands of Jesus, I shall be at your side. But what is it you are to do and whither are you to go?"

"I am to tell the world of this holy life," said Zatthu with thrilling tones and rapt expression. "That is what I am to do. Wherever I see men sunk in selfishness and needing to hear that wondrous story, there I am to go. And the path will be made clear: the light will come—yes, it will come and enlighten our souls as surely as the sun will keep on giving light to the world."

"But what is to become of my poor suffering country?" questioned Naarah. "You, Zatlhu, made us think that you were called to set it free and lift it into greatness; but you failed. Then we placed our hopes in Jesus: but he too has failed. Who then shall make Jerusalem a quiet habitation, not one of the stakes of which shall ever be removed nor any of the cords thereof be broken?"

"Jehovah," replied Zatthu. "Jehovah alone, and in his own time and his own way. We in our ignorance can only say: His will be done. When our sin and selfishness needed rebuke, He sent us Jesus to show us the way of righteousness and holiness as it has never been shown to men before. And He who has dealt so wondrously and mercifully with us can be trusted to do all things well."

XI

Ten days had passed since Zatthu's return from Jerusalem. With Thisoa he had sought the old olive tree near the edge of the high ground that commanded the lake, and sitting under its shadow they were watching the waves of Gennesaret flash in the afternoon sunlight. In silence they sat for a while; then Thisoa said, half-queryingly as if asking confirmation of what she really knew,

"And so Eliud Merari has passed on."

"Yes, and grandly, even as he lived."

"You told us how he died; but I do not believe you said to my father and mother and Shobek, when we all came together to hear your story, what you would wish to say to me. Is it not so?"

"You have read me aright, Thisoa," said Zatthu, looking at her with a smile. "I could not then tell all that Merari said without giving too great consequence to myself and to what I have been doing since I thought myself, so mistakenly, raised up to deliver Israel. But to you, to whom I used to speak so freely in those days when your father first opened his home to me; to you, to whom I have now given my whole heart, I am ready, yes, glad, to relate everything that passed.

"That hour with Merari was indeed a wondrous one and never to be forgotten. The breath of life seemed almost gone out of him when I found him lying in his chamber that was flooded by the light of the setting sun. His eyes were closed, but he knew me as I softly entered the room, though I had not allowed my presence to be announced to him. For his spirit has for some time been so nearly free from the body that its sight has not been that of mere mortal vision. He has seen even as those see who have entered Jehovah's country; and I soon found that I did not need to tell him what I had with my own eyes witnessed in and about Jerusalem.

“‘I am so glad you have come,’ he said: ‘for now I can die. The sun and I bid farewell to the world together.’

“‘And you could not die before I came?’ I asked.

“‘I was not willing to, and I was sure Jehovah would bring you before my eyes were forever closed. No, I was holding the breath of life to see you, there are things I want so much to say. And first, I must tell you that I know all. I know that Jesus was Messiah. I know how he died upon the cross. I know how he rose from the tomb and walked with his disciples. And I know how he was received up into heaven and will be seen on earth no more.’

“‘So I do not need to tell you the things I have seen and heard.’

“‘No. It is not really for that that I have been waiting for speech with you. I have wanted to give you an old man’s dying blessing. You have failed, and yet you have gloriously triumphed. My heart went out to you when you sought me first and made known to me your great ambition. For your zeal, your devotion to our bleeding country, and your sublime faith in Jehovah, I had deep respect. But I felt that you were misguided. Unselfish as your love of Israel seemed, I saw that love of self was so mingled with it that you were to pass through the valley of humiliation. The dark days that were before you crowded on my sight. But I could not warn you. I could not teach you. It was for Jehovah and for Him only to do that.

“‘And in His own way He has done it. Tribulation came. Failure came. You lay dying of a broken heart. But Jehovah did not suffer you to die. The bruised reed He did not break and the smoking flax He did not quench; but in the depths of your wounded spirit He brought forth judgment unto victory. Through Jesus you were brought from death to life; and to Jesus you turned because you saw in him the light of the world. That rebellious self which had led you astray you conquered utterly, and you gave to Jesus, our

Messiah, the devotion you would fain have won to yourself through all Judæa. It was well done. It was well done, my friend, and Jehovah will bless you for it all your days.'

"Instinctively I knelt as the old man solemnly uttered these last words, and placing his hands upon my head he said in tones that thrilled me through and through: 'Jehovah bless you and keep you; Jehovah make his face shine upon you and be gracious unto you; Jehovah lift up his countenance upon you and give you peace.'

"For some moments I knelt by the bedside. I was loath to rise, for I felt as if I had been taken out of the noise, the strife and the passions of the world and that Jehovah was very near. But, rising after a while and resuming my seat, I looked upon Merari; and as I looked I was filled with awe. His eyes were closed and there was such a light of peace and holiness upon his face that I thought his spirit had passed with the benediction he had given me. Ah, what a solemn beauty his features had! Never shall I see such a look on any human countenance again. I gazed at him rapt and silent. I could not have opened my lips to break that solemn stillness.

"But presently he opened his eyes and looked at me with a smile of wondrous sweetness. Reading my thought, he said,

"'No, my son, I have not passed, but my end is very near. Give my love to my dear Naarah and to her noble husband. Tell them that my last thoughts were of them and that a great joy filled my heart as I dwelt upon their deep abiding happiness. They too, I know, have turned to Jesus as Messiah, even as you have done. The call has come to you. Be true to it and you will all find peace.'

"'Yes, the call has come,' I said. 'We have heard it. We shall be true to it, and it will surely give us the peace you promise. Perhaps, indeed, the peace into which you have so perfectly entered will not come to us at once. We must not obey the call because of what joy and happiness it will bring to us. Jesus heard Jehovah's own voice speaking, and to him

it brought the cross. And though he has promised peace to those who would follow him, he also said many things to warn his disciples that peace might sometimes be bought by pain. For John, whom he loved so deeply, told me that in the very night of his betrayal, in his last solemn charge to his chosen Twelve he said these words: "In the world ye shall have tribulation; but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world."

"'You have grown wise, my son; you have grown very wise,' Merari said the moment I had done speaking; and he looked at me yearningly to show his deep gratification. 'You need no words from me. You have learned all that I could teach you—yes and much more. You, and all those who have become so dear to you, will be true to the call and you will find peace, even though you first pass through troubled waters. And would that my down-trodden country might find it also! I fear it has brought woe upon itself by slaying that holy man. But Jehovah has watched over it in time past; He will surely do so in the years to come.

"'But the sun is setting and darkness is stealing over the world. And over these eyes of mine that have looked on it for more than four score years the darkness is stealing also. No longer can I see your face. I could not see my children were they here. But some day I shall see you all again in the land I am entering even now. Already its light is shining full upon me like a morning sun. Oh, wondrous, glorious light! Farewell!"

"He said no more, but lay with his hands folded on his breast and that same look of radiant happiness that gave his countenance a more than earthly beauty. For a long time the look lingered, and my soul was filled with peace as I gazed at him in reverence and awe. So still he lay that his breathing was hardly apparent and we could not tell the moment when his spirit passed. All that we were sure of was that, soon after sundown, he was not, for Jehovah took him."

Zatthu ceased and after a few moments Thisoa said,

"A noble life; a noble death. Was not he truly one of the followers of Jesus of Nazareth?"

"As surely as Nicodemus, who revered him but did not proclaim himself a disciple; as surely as Joseph of Arimathæa who laid him in the tomb. Many, very many are doubtless blessing his name who will never tell the world how much they owe him, how deeply they revere him. Only with hushed voices, at the fireside, and to groups of friends, will the multitudes he healed tell the wondrous story of their deliverance."

"And will he count that following him?"

"I am sure he will if in the heart the feeling of reverence and gratitude be deeply cherished. The light cannot come to all in the same way."

"How do you think it will come to Marcus and where will it lead him?"

"Ah, that is a hard question to answer, and to Marcus it may well prove a troublesome, yes, a terrible question. But if he has to choose between Jesus and Rome, I am sure he will choose Jesus."

"No," said Thisoa very soberly, "the light cannot come to all in the same way. But how glad I am that it has come to you as it has and made you long to give it to the world. A wonderful story you have to tell, and wonderfully you will tell it." And as Thisoa said this she gave Zatthu a look of pride and deep affection.

"Yes, a wonderful story, Thisoa, and wonderful was your own part in it. I have indeed been strangely led and I shall glory in making it known. I shall glory in seeking hearers and telling them of the light that has come into the world. No, not for me," Zatthu went on with kindling eye and tones that thrilled Thisoa by their intensity, "the quiet fireside tale, the cautious speech to a listening group of trusted friends. In the busy street, in the village when the toil of the day is over, in the market place, in the synagogues of the very men who exulted in Jesus' death, I shall lift up my voice and say that

Messiah has come to take away the sin of the world. My soul was on fire when I told my people that Jehovah would break their yoke of bondage if they would but trust Him. Yes, my soul was on fire, but the fire was not pure and clean. It was kindled by a love of self that I did not know and see. That fire had to be burnt out, and in the burning I almost perished. But that proud unhallowed self was consumed, and the fire that is in me now has been kindled by the healer of Nazareth who raised me from death to life: and that fire will burn ever more brightly till I die. It will kindle my lips to speak as I never spoke when I thought myself Jehovah's messenger. It will light my path and lead me whither I know not; but the path that shines before me I shall follow to the end of my days. If it leads me to traverse raging waters, I shall fear not. If it brings me scorn and hatred, I shall care not. If the cross is to be my fate, I shall shrink not; for I shall think it has been forever hallowed by the death that Jesus died."

Other words equally fervent were about to rush from Zatthu's lips, but even as he was about to utter them he paused and looked at Thisoa; for the thought came suddenly to him that the ardor which filled his soul might not have fired hers also. Would she possibly feel that the future he pictured was too sombre and was bringing a shadow on that happiness which had come like a flood of sunshine into their lives?

It was indeed only a question, not a doubt, that visited his heart; and the question at once gave way to an exquisite joy as he caught the rapt and exalted look upon her face and the boundless trust with which her eyes met his own. But she did not speak, for she feared lest any words, however devoted, she might utter would disturb the current of his speech. Nor were words needed. Her look gave new fire to his spirit, and stretching his hands heavenward, he cried,

"Oh, thou mighty and eternal Jehovah, it is thou that hast sent to earth this holy man! It is thou that hast taken him

to thyself now that he has revealed as it has never been revealed before, thy glory, thy mercy, thy long-suffering! Through the face of Jesus of Nazareth thou hast shined upon the world. Through his boundless tenderness which made him take little children in his arms and bless them; through his infinite compassion which healed the sick and breathed forgiveness to the sinful; through the divine depth of his love which not even the cross could slay, he has made this earth as well as heaven to be thy dwelling place. Yea, verily, in him thou, who art from everlasting, hast walked with the children of men. Not in Moses who talked with thee face to face, and not in Elijah who was carried by thine own messengers to heaven did thy spirit rest as in him whom thine own chosen people could only doom to a cruel death. But for him there was no death. He rose; he made mortality immortal; he was called by thee to heaven and forever he dwells with thee. Forever will his life, his death, his conquest over death, make known to men thy everlasting might, thy everlasting love. Light! light! light! Oh, glorious, wondrous light! It has shined from heaven! It has flooded this footstool of Jehovah! Even from its dust and ashes we can now look up to God!"

The fire in his spirit had spent itself. He ceased, and as he did so he found Thisoa standing at his side and gazing at him with the same look of devotion that had given him his inspiration. She was ready to speak now, and out of the depths of her own spirit she said joyously,

"Yes, Zatthu, the light has come, full, cloudless, glorious light! You have opened my eyes to see as they have never seen before. How it can be I know not, but it is even as you say. This earth is no longer what it was; for He whose hands created it has in some way made his very presence seen and felt among us here. And if ever we are counted worthy to behold Him, I feel that we shall look upon that holy face I saw upon the mountain."

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